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THE TANTRATATTVA OF ŚRĪYUKTA ŚIVA
CANDRA VIDYĀRṆAVA BHATTACĀRYA
MAHODAYA

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY

ARTHUR AVALON (pseud.)

AND

ŚRĪYUKTA BARADĀ KĀNTA MAJUMDĀR

EDITED BY

ARTHUR AVALON

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other hand, he wrote at a time when, according to his account, Hinduism was at a low ebb, and in its lower forms apparently productive of many evils. Contrasting, as some of his successors have since done, an over-painted picture of Western "Light" with a fictitious or exaggerated Eastern "Darkness," he expressed himself, as some of them have also since done, much perturbed by the fact "that for some time past a very unjust and unhappy impression appeared to have been made in the public mind by encomiums passed on the Hindu writings."¹ He was certainly not himself guilty of the offence he here deplored. For we are told by him that the "Hindu system is the most puerile, impure, and bloody of any system of idolatry that was ever established on earth" amongst "an idle, effeminate, and dissolute people" of "disordered imaginations," who "frequent their temples, not for devotion, but for the satisfaction of their licentious appetites." The result of this alleged general depravity is stated in the extraordinary charge that "a chaste woman faithful to her husband is scarcely to be found in all the millions of Hindus," whose "notions of the evil of sin are so superficial" that "they cannot be expected to promulgate the doctrine" of endless punishment in Hell-fire.²

Given these circumstances, we are not surprised to find that he had only eyes for that which he understood to be bad. The good which is to be found in other religions is of no value to the mere controversialist. Thus, given the general brevity of his account, over-lengthy descriptions are set forth of such matters as how to kill an enemy by making his image in bull's-dung, taking it to a burning-ground, then boiling the flesh of a hawk with spirits in a skull, with invocations to Antaka; charms against snake-bite, and so forth. Ward, like many another who followed him (and I deal with his case as in many respects typical of the others), seems to have thought that the chief and practically the sole subjects of the Tantra were sensual rites and black magic. It does not seem to have occurred to either him or them that, apart from its manifold secular contents, the Śāstra is the repository of a high philosophic doctrine, and of the means whereby its truth may through bodily psychic and spiritual development be realized. It is doubtless less easy to understand and describe these matters. The Scripture, however, is misjudged if we look

¹ Ward, vol. ii, p. lxxiv. The author of a quite recent work inspired by the same motive thinks to cure the European mind, "corrupted by theological moonings and mystical sentimentalism," by violent and ignorant invective. "Hinduism," he writes, "is the most material and childishly superstitious animalism that has ever masqueraded as idealism." It has no morality, and the absurd object of its worship is "a mixture of Bacchus, Don Juan, and Dick Turpin." It is not a religion at all, but "is a pit of abomination, as far set from God as the mind of man can go"; and so forth. "The Light of India," by Harold Begbie.

merely to practices to be found therein similar to those contained in Western Grimoires, such as "Le Petit Albert," and other even less reputable works. A cursory glance, it is true, is thrown on higher matters, but with the same result. The lofty doctrines of Yoga, which the author of a quite recent work¹ finds to be, "with its repulsive developments" "much the same as Shamanism," was long ago declared by his predecessor to be "absurd, impious, and ridiculous". It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the more disputable theories and ill-famed practices of some of the Tantras are not accurately described, and are indeed misunderstood. Whatever we may think of such doctrines, they are not truly represented by the statement that a certain division of worshippers seek to "blunt the edge of the passions with excessive indulgence."

The later experience of Brian Hodgson, whose valued work in Nepal should be better known, led him to describe the Tantra as "lust, mummery, and black magic."

The work of H. H. Wilson, though stated to be based in part on the texts, is admitted by its author to be necessarily superficial, depending on a cursory inspection of some of the documents.² The account of the Tantras occupies but a small part of a description which purports to deal with all the Hindu sects. Of these Scriptures in particular he wrote what is as true now as then, "that they had been little examined by European scholars." He added, however, that such attention as had been paid to them was enough in his opinion to warrant the accusation that "they are authorities for all that is most abominable in the present state of the Hindu religion."³ His work is also written from the standpoint of one to whom all other systems are "shown to be fallacious and false by the Ithuriel spear of Christian truth," a standpoint which did not permit a countenance of either "devotees of superstition" on the one hand, or the men of learning on the other, "whose toleration," he complained, "is so comprehensive that it amounts to indifference to truth." The Tāntrik ritual in particular is described to be "nonsensical extravagance," at which, he says, he is disposed to laugh. Nyāsas⁴ are "absurd gesticulations," and so forth. H. H. Wilson was doubtless a distinguished Orientalist, and his work is in many respects of acknowledged value; but there are matters in his book which, from want of sympathy and knowledge, he wholly failed to understand, not only as regards general Hindu doctrines, but the specific teaching and ritual which is to be found in the Tantra. Nyāsa, for instance, is alleged to be absurd, but it does not

¹ "Antiquities of India," by Dr. L. Barnett, p. 17.

² Wilson, vol. i, p. 8.

³ Wilson, vol. ii, p. 77.

an advance¹ towards a more correct appreciation of the Śāstra, even though it renders the same kind of justice as that which is done when a not unintelligent man whom we have hitherto called a knave is charged with being merely a vulgar fool. It must, however, be now obvious that conclusions based on such fragmentary material, and without knowledge of the occult teachings, is without authoritative value. In the present state of our knowledge, generalizations concerning the Tantra are likely in important matters to be hazardous. They seem to me to be particularly valueless when they take the form of mere abuse.

There is another important matter which is to be borne in mind, and which one of my Indian critics thinks that I have myself overlooked in my Edition of the *Mahānirvāṇa*. He says that the account I have there given of Tāntrik teaching is vitiated by the erroneous supposition that all the Tāntrik works are complementary to each other, and that I have ignored the distinctions which exist between varying schools and traditions. I was not unaware of the alleged distinctions to which my critic refers, though their existence and nature have yet to be established. I, however, then expressly stated that I did not deal with these subjects, reserving as I did such observations as I had at present to make for this work. A number of questions present themselves for solution upon this difficult matter. What, for instance, are the specific characteristics of the various classes of Āgamas known as Dāmara, Yāmala, Uddiṣa, and Tantra, whether of the so-called Śaiva (such as the Kāmika, Dīpta, Vijaya, etc.); Vaiṣṇava (such as the Gandharva, Gautama, Rādhā, Brihadrudrayāmala and others); or the Śākta, Kaula, or Devī type of Tantra? A similar question may be raised as to the sixty-four Tantras of the Three Krāntas respectively. Again, what are the Tantras in force in the present Svetavarāha Kalpa? Again, what is the relation between all these Śāstras as representing the specifically "Indian" Tantra and the "Buddhist" Tantra? Finally, what, if any, are the developments which have taken place as regards these Śāstrik teachings? For Indian thought moves, even though some who write of it from books only think of it as something merely past. As H. H. Wilson says of the Hindu religion generally: "Its internal constitution has not been exempt from those varieties to which all human systems of belief are subject, and it has undergone great and frequent modifications, until it presents an appearance which there is great reason to suppose is very different from that which it originally wore." Lastly, what (and this

¹ Not that it is the first. In more moderate language Sir Monier Williams had already suggested a distinction between the original Tāntrik teaching and its subsequent developments and between the Tantras them-

is my immediate subject) is the Tāntrik doctrine and practice as it is at present understood and followed? When these and a number of other questions of great difficulty are solved, we may permit ourselves a greater dogmatism than our present state of knowledge allows. I am more immediately concerned with another matter—namely, the present beliefs of the Indian peoples. In connection, however, with this purpose, I may here say this: if it is assumed that there are different schools, then Tantras of the same school may obviously be taken as complementary to one another. In respect of other Tantras, even if they do, as alleged, represent varying traditions, it will, I think, be found that there are in any case many common elements accompanying their own alleged distinctive differences which render them complementary to other Tantras to that extent. Take, for instance, the specific Tāntrik Yoga, known as Śatcakrabhedha, which involves concentration on the lower centres. This is dealt with in Tantras which are alleged to be the expression of differing doctrine and practice in other respects. Similar observations may be made as regards the general worship (Upāsana), and so forth.

As the foregoing observations may possibly be misunderstood by some to mean that I think that there is nothing in the Tantra which is likely to provoke dissent, and that nothing has been done in the name, or by followers, of the Śāstra, which is in fact evil, it is necessary for me to say that that is not my opinion, though I think that the Śāstra as a whole has not hitherto been understood—a fate which it has shared with many another Hindu doctrine and practice.

Looking at the matter from a purely objective standpoint, every Orientalist must admit that an accurate knowledge of this Śāstra is of first-rate importance. But apart from this historical view, there are in the Tantra principles and practices which are of value in themselves. There is, for instance, a deep philosophic doctrine and a wonderful ritual which artistically shares with the Buddhist Tantras, though in a different way, the vehement splendour which has aptly been ascribed to the latter; a ritual which is at the same time, when rightly understood, singularly rational and psychologically profound. One of my English critics aptly appreciated this character of the Tāntrik ritual when he said that “from one point of view it is perhaps the most elaborate system of auto-suggestion in the world;”¹ a remark which, as well as the theory of auto-suggestion itself, will have a deeper content for those who are conversant with the Indian doctrine of the Ātman and states of consciousness than for the ordinary English reader. It is necessary, however, that the ritual should be understood, otherwise it will not unlikely appear to be the “nonsensical extravagance” which

It is unnecessary here to further develop a proposition of which the book now translated is itself the proof.

I had at first intended merely to draw upon the author's work and other sources for the purpose of a presentation in Western form of some of the fundamental principles of a Śāstra which has been hitherto so little understood. The execution of this intention I defer to some future time, when I hope to deal in my own way with the metaphysical and psychological bases of Hindu worship, a subject, on its practical side, hitherto untouched. For the present, however, I present the subject in the words of an orthodox Hindu, who is an adherent of the Tantra Śāstra, and whose work (*Tantratattva*) is here translated.¹ For those who might be disposed to accept the correctness of the views expressed by the Authors above cited would not unlikely entertain a suspicion of the genuineness of the Tāntrik character of a work of the present description, if upon a reading they should find it to be neither silly, nor vulgarly superstitious, magical, wicked, or obscene. The exposition, therefore, here given is not mine, but the Pandit's.

His work is, however, in no sense complete, but deals in a popular style with some portions only of the subject-matter. After I had written the Introduction which follows, I received a letter from him in which he explains that his book was published over twenty years ago, with a view to combating both the errors of what is called "Reformed" or "Protestant" Hinduism, and the mistakes of some incompetent defenders of orthodoxy; and that therefore both the matter and form of his work were determined by the arguments of those whom he controverted. As a result, his reply, which is presented in a somewhat discursive manner, does not treat of some subjects with which he desired to deal. He writes, therefore, to me to say that he has in preparation a third part, in which he proposes to give an exposition of the philosophy of the Tantra. The two Parts, now published, treat of (to use our parlance) the religious side of *certain portions* of the subject, though in India philosophy and religion are mingled in a way which the West has not known since the age when philosophy was held to be *Ancilla Theologiæ*. This third Part, when ready, I hope to publish in continuation of the volume now issued.

Further, there are certain matters of doctrine and practice which are, as the Author states, for the initiate alone, and of which, therefore, he treats either cursorily or not at all. What, however, he does say will effect more than a mere acquittal of his system of the wholesale charges of absurdity and vice so commonly made against it. Referring to what is blameworthy, the Pandit himself says: "We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things"; though he adds: "But how are

Kālī or Śiva or Tantra to blame?" As regards the likelihood of abuse in any system, there is more to be said for the Hindu view of the naturally crooked influence of time than for the notion of "progress" from moment to moment which some of us in the West would seem to entertain. But for all that, it would indeed be a phenomenon of strange degeneracy if India, which has thought the deepest thoughts of the world, and which has been marked by the intensity of its religious feelings, should, even in its most unfortunate days, have produced a system of extensive influence and authority which is intellectually nothing but "brainless hocus-pocus," and morally a mere facile reversal of the high notions of Dharma,¹ which have distinguished its peoples beyond all the races. As a matter of fact, and to my knowledge, even at the present day some of the most learned Pandits and the greatest Sādhakas esteem and follow this Scripture, which they regard as the treasure of their heart. How comes this to be if it is merely, as alleged, the debased product of the Hindu spirit "at its lowest and very worst"? Whether particular portions of its teachings or practice should be generally approved is another matter. The difficulties, however, which attend an exposition of even such parts of the Śāstra as seem to be at first view readily exposed to attack are such that those who have any real knowledge concerning them will be the first to abstain from hasty generalizations, particularly when they take the form of mere abuse.

As regards such portions of doctrine as are here exposed, the Author in the course of the defence of his own beliefs has in many an instance severely castigated his opponents for their inaccurate statements and loose thinking. For reasons, however, which I give in the Introduction which follows, views more favourable to the Author's position now more generally prevail in India than was the case when his work was first written. Many even of those who nowadays are not prepared to accept orthodox doctrine in its entirety are yet disposed to think that the beliefs of their fathers were not, after all, quite so foolish as under the first influences of the English "Illumination" they considered them to be. But this change of view is not peculiar to India only. We ourselves have also recently experienced something of the same kind. An intelligent understanding of Christian ideas and Catholic ritual has dispelled many a shallow criticism to which they have been subjected by a narrow sectarianism on the one hand, and an equally narrow "rationalism" on the other. By this, however, it is not meant that no adverse criticisms in either of these matters have had force, or that in some Indian quarters the Śāstra is not still regarded as (to use the words of an Indian writer) "mines of superstition".

on the subject of which its author speaks. Thus the *mudrā* of the Panchatattva does not, as there stated, mean "mystical gestures," but, in the case of the *rājasika* and *tāmasika* panchatattva, parched cereal of various kinds as defined by the *Yoginī Tantra*.¹ In the *sāttvika sādhanā* it has another and esoteric meaning,² equally dissimilar from the sense of the term "*mudrā*" as that word is employed in ordinary *upāsana* and *hathayoga*. "*Nigama*" is not the name of a "sacred book appealed to by *Dakshināchārins*" as opposed to "*Āgama*," but is that form of *Tantra* in which the *Devī* is *guru* instead of *śiṣya*, as opposed to "*Āgama*," in which the *Devī* is *śiṣya* and *Śiva* is *guru*.³ It follows, therefore, that *Āgama* does not mean "a sacred book appealed to by *Vāmāchārins*" as opposed to *Nigama* of the followers of *Dakshināchāra*. Nor is the term *Vāmāchārin* itself a synonym for *Kaula*, for a person may be the first without being the second.⁴ The *Mahānirvāna Tantra* is not the only *Tantra* "attributed to *Śiva*," but all *Śāstra* so called has Him as its Revealer and *Ganeśa* as its scribe.⁵ The *Śāradātīlaka* and *Mantramahodadhī* are not *Tantras*, but *Tāntrik* compendia and commentaries. The *Tāntrik* rite called *Bhūtaśuddhi* does not mean "removal of demons,"⁶ but the purification of the elements (earth, air, fire, etc., and the *tattvas* of which they are derivatives) in the body of the *sādhaka*, and so forth.

As might be expected, errors abound in accounts given by authors claiming less expert competence, whether European or Indian. Thus an

¹ Chap. vi:

Bhrishtadānyādīkang yad yad charvaniyang prachakshate,
Sā *mudrā* kathitā devī sarveshāṅg naganandini.

The same and other errors occur in *Encyc. Brit.*, xiii, pp. 511-512.

² See *Āgamasāra*; *Kaivalya Tantra*, and the *Tantra passim*, and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ See the *Āgamādvaitanirṇaya*, cited *post*. On the contrary, the *Nigamas* are said to be *Pūrṇarahasya*. *Āgama* and *Nigama* are also applied to the *Veda*, but *Āgama* as applied to the *Tantra* has the above signification, though, as Professor Whitney says, it etymologically means "that which has come down" (*Century Dictionary and Cyclopædia*, vol. ix, p. 978).

⁴ The *Kaula* is a member of the highest of the several divisions of worshippers (*Āchāra*), of which *Vāmāchāra* is one. It is only after a *Sādhaka* has fulfilled all preceding *Dharmas* that he is qualified for *Kauladharmā*.

⁵ See *Gāyatri Tantra*, chap. I. Professor Whitney (*loc. cit.*) says that their authorship is sometimes ascribed to *Dattātreya*. Of this I have never heard, and if such ascription is made it is incorrect. There is a work dealing with *Indrajāla Vidyā* called the *Dattātreya Tantra*, as also a *Yāmala* of the same name, and *Dattātreya* is a *Rishi* said to be particularly revered by the *Nakulāvadhūta* Sect. The *Tantras* generally were, as stated in the text, revealed by *Śiva*.

Indian writer¹ explains the Mudrā of the Panchatattva to be "gold or coins." It is true that "coin" is one of the meanings of the term "Mudrā," but even in the absence of special information it might have reasonably been surmised that "Tāntriks" do not worship with a gold mohur or rupee. Nor is the Śakti, which is by these and other rites worshipped, material force, as was supposed by the founder of the Bhāratavarshīya Brāhmasamāj, who wrote some years ago of the European materialists of his day as "Śāktas offering dry homage to force victorious over the European Bhaktas, worshippers of the God of Love."² Nor is it the fact "that Śāktas divide themselves into the Dakshina and Vāma classes according to whether they attach the greater importance to the male or to the female principle respectively"³ and so forth. Misconception of the teaching of Tantra, together with abuses committed by one of the communities of Tāntrik worshippers, led a Bengali apologist of the Śāstra, when writing some twenty years ago on the subject of Tantra, to say:⁴ "Unfortunately, however, their intentions have been so grossly misrepresented in our days that the very name of Tantra shocks our nerves; yet two-thirds of our religious rites are Tāntrik, and almost half our medicine is Tāntrik."

The causes of this neglect of the Śāstra in the country of its origin and in the West are several. Their consideration will also explain the standpoint from which this book here translated is written. In the first place, in the case of India, must be reckoned the effects of English education. This, when first introduced, not merely struck at faith in all Indian Śāstra, but was in a particular manner adverse to that form of it which was then current, and with which we here deal. Tāntrik Hinduism is in its more common aspect, essentially of a sacramental and ritualistic character. Those who first introduced and gave English education were for the most part Protestants, with no sympathy with, or understanding of, a mode of religious thought and practice which to a considerable extent, both in its inner spirit and outward forms, bore resemblance to that which in Europe Protestantism, in its various sects, had arisen to oppose. Their general attitude is illustrated by a passage in a recent work⁵ (containing

¹ "Country and Temple of Kāmākhya," *Calcutta Review*, October, 1911.

² "The New Dispensation," pp. 103, 109. Nor, it may be here noted, is it correct to say that Tāntriks believe the universe to have been developed by the inherent power of matter, as stated in the "Cyclopædia of India," vol. v, p. 72. Nor is it correct to speak, as H. H. Wilson did ("Essays," p. 241), of the "worship of the female principle as distinct from the Divinity."

³ "The Soul of India," by G. Howells, p. 320.

⁴ "Lectures on the Hindu Religion," by K. Chakravarthi (1893), itself an inaccurate, though well-intentioned, little book.

⁵ "The Light of Asia," by H. W. Parker, 1890.

a singularly ignorant and unjust estimate of Hinduism), in which the author says that, when standing before a Buddhist shrine, he felt as if he was before that of St. Carlo Borromeo at Milan, adding: "But the chief feeling that one had was of the extraordinary close similarity of Latin Christianity and Pre-Christian Buddhism—the feeling and sensation of the *same immemorial superstition* persisting through the forms and ritual of two religions so diametrically opposed." As this matter presented itself to the English teachers, so it did to the Indian students, who (to use a Bengali expression) "held their tail". This the latter did the more readily both because of the abuses for which some of the followers of the Śāstra were responsible and of the unintelligent and mechanical formalism of the worship of others. To the Hindu so educated the Tantra was in all its parts as much superstitious "mummery" as it was to his English teachers. This education did not, however, from the religious point of view, bear the results which were expected of it. For while many Hindus were led through such teaching to reject their ancestral belief, but few were found who were willing to accept the form of faith which was offered to them as its substitute. Possibly to some extent different results might have been achieved had there been more points of contact between the two faiths, for these might have served both to guard the common religious sentiment and to afford some sort of foundation upon which a Christian structure might have been raised. Such had been the thought, in earlier times, of Jesuit missionaries both in India and China. Many of the Hindus whose faith had been unduly disturbed commenced (so far as Indians can—a matter for them of fortunate difficulty) to question the validity of the religious sense itself. A period of scepticism then followed, which, of course, has not wholly passed away in India any more than it will wholly pass away elsewhere.

Theories stale in the West, but new in the East, were adopted by some with the same indiscriminating fervour as were the discarded fashions of English "art" and articles of commerce. Some there were who, judging all things by a narrow test of "utilitarian" principle, found every historic religion, whether of East or West, to be the outcome merely of the deceit of priests, whose "highest achievement" in all lands has been "abomination worship." And of this in India¹ the Śākta and other cults were cited as the worst examples.²

¹ As regards the West, the author of the work cited is of opinion that the system of auricular confession made further priestly efforts in the direction of "abomination worship" supererogatory.

² "Hindu Castes and Sects," by J. N. Bhaṭṭācārjī. I cite this apparently nāstika work as one of a type only, it being fairly well known and read. The

The use of this strong language applied to all the religions of East and West suggests the observation that, while grounds for adverse judgment may have existed, we must examine the criticisms by Hindus of the beliefs of their countrymen as we would any other, in order to see whether the author knows that of which he speaks, and, if so, whether he is free (which the author cited was not) from prejudice against "religion" in general, or the sectarianism which exists in India, as elsewhere.¹ Nor is the language used in such cases to be always taken literally. If, for instance, we can imagine the astonished mind of an otherwise uninformed Hindu, after the perusal of the stanza of the "Orange" hymn cited below,² it is not improbable to suppose that a too literal understanding of its words might give him notions as to the "obscenity" of the tenets and practice of the Catholic Church which would appear exaggerated even to the inflamed judgment of the author of the "hymn" in question.

In the West this raw philosophizing has for some time past been appreciated at its true value. More mature views will find a deeper source for the religious instinct than the machinations (even though they exist) of priests.

The following passage from another writer,³ purporting to give the verdict of "New India on Religion," is, in its blustering crudities, reminiscent of our own cheap rationalism of the second half of the last century:

"The world is passing from faith to reason. The future is for reason. When reason is established the problem of the world will be easy of solution. Reason will stand no miracles, no humbug, no special incarnations or exclusive revelations. It will elbow out all creeds, and admit nothing which cannot be demonstrated to the intelligence. Forms of worship are excrescences of religion. Belief in the supernatural and transcendent is getting into a discount. The element of mystery once believed to be an inseparable factor of religion is disappearing," and so forth.

They are but weakly met by such mawkish presentments of the "Religion of the Future" as those of which the following passage is a vaguely-conceived and worded, however well-intentioned, example: "No priest can lead us by the nose and make us believe in meaningless practices which profit no one but the professional

¹ Particular animosity used to exist, and amongst the sectarian-minded still exists, between Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas.

² "Scarlet Church of all uncleanness,
Sink thou to the deep abyss,
To the orgies of obscenity,
Where the Hell-bound Furies hiss,
Where thy father's Satan's eye
Hails thee, hellish Popery."

³ The *Indian World*, July, 1910.

priest!¹ Free thought will be the watchword of the churches of the future. Religion will be a real being, becoming. Growing in life from within like an endogen; drawing sustenance also from without. Religion is to be in tune with the infinite. It will be the budding forth of the lotus of the heart; the correspondence with the environments of the soul; the opening out of the fountains from within; the setting afloof of the waters of life proceeding from the throne of the Most High. Religion will not be a theorem, a Q.E.D., but a problem, Q.E.F.”²

A more definite attempt to reconcile religious tradition and “modern thought” was made by the Brāhmasamāj, the doctrines of which, as also of the Secularist school, are combated in this book. The Ādisamāj, which preceded it, more closely adhered to orthodox Hinduism, being distinguished from the latter by the rejection of some of its beliefs and practices. In the Brāhmasamāj the doctrines became of a more syncretistic character. There was a further divergence from orthodoxy, and an attempt was made to incorporate alien forms of thought and ritual. The Brāhmasamāj describes itself in the words of one of its prominent supporters as “a humble gleaner of the truth wherever found.” The resulting eclecticism possesses its share of the weaknesses of all such systems.

All these influences, the outcome of English education—whether they be of the Secularist type, abandoning all ancient forms of beliefs, or of that which claims to reform but as often destroys them, or of the more modern kind which seeks a belief which shall be freed of form—led away from the standpoint of orthodox form, which is that of the Tantra. The process was accelerated by the decadence of many of the followers of the Vāmācāra community governed by the Śāstra.

In the general neglect of Śāstra, and repulsion caused by abuse, no attempt was made to ascertain what in fact were the true teachings of that portion of it which governed this community. No distinction was made between such doctrine and the abuses of it, nor between the particular portion of the Śāstra prescribing and regulating Vāmācāra ritual and those other portions which governed other divisions of Sādhakas or the community in general. The Śāstra was, generally in its entirety, condemned as useless where it was not considered morally harmful. To some extent these conclusions may have influenced European Orientalists, but

¹ This and the rest of the quotation are, of course, inspired by a type of Western thought. To the Hindu mantra is not mere akṣara, nor guru a mere man, but the manifestation of the Supreme and only Guru, the Ādinātha Mahākāla. The revolt, however, is supported to some extent by the fact of the incompetence of many of the gurus.

² “The Religion of the Future,” by Hemendra Nath Sinha, B.A., pp. 38-39. The last sentence is like the rest obscure, but perhaps indicates the workings of the pragmatic bacillus even in the East.

probably in much less degree; for scientific investigation of human activities in whatsoever sphere is not (without closure of all historical inquiry) to be thwarted by the fear that what may be found on investigation is not that which is likely to be approved. Nor are the difficulties of a linguistic character, the Tantras being written in comparatively simple Sanskrit. The reason is rather to be found in difficulties of a different kind.

The Tantra in some of its aspects is a secret doctrine (*guptavidyā*) to be gathered, not from the written record, but verbally from those who hold the key to it. So with Eastern allegory it is said: "Verily, verily, and without a doubt the Veda Śāstra and Purāṇas are like a common woman, free to all, but the doctrine of Śambhu (*i.e.*, the Tantra) is like a secret house bride, to reveal which is death."¹ The key to the method has been with the initiate.

Next there are two special difficulties as regards the record; firstly, its fragmentary character and its existence in manuscripts which are not easily procurable, and then the technical character of the terminology. Next, the ritualistic character of the Tantra requires as a preliminary for its exposition at least some general knowledge regarding the subject, which does not ordinarily exist except among Hindus. In the case of certain Tāntric doctrines and practices, the more ordinary difficulties have been increased owing to the complex and esoteric character of the rituals, and, as some allege, to the existence of higher and lower traditions (*āmnāya*), which to-day have become confused. Lastly, while the Śāstra provides by its various *ācāras* for all types, from the lowest to the most advanced, its essential concepts, under whatever aspects they are manifested, and into whatever pattern they are woven, are (as Professor de la Vallée Poussin says of the Buddhist Tantra) of a metaphysical and subtle character. This is particularly so as regards Śaktitattva, Mantratattva, and Yogatattva, though there are others. It is claimed that the true Tāntrikācārya is the master of Veda, and that its esoteric teaching can only be fully understood from the Śāstra and its accompanying traditions, and the personal experiences which are the practical fruits of its Sādhana.

Since this work was first published the so-called "progressive" movement has been followed by a reaction in the orthodox Hindu world, which is not without its own defects.² The spread of Theosophical ideas first

¹ Vedaśāstrapurāṇāni sāmānyaganikā iva

Yā punah śāmbhavi vidyā guptā kulabadhūriṇi

Prakāśe prāṇahāniḥ syāt satyang satyang na sangṣayah.

So also the Tantrasāra (Ed. R. M. Chatterji), p. 691, which says: "Kadāchid-dehahānistu na chāgupti kadāchana, varam pūjā na kartavyā na cha vyaktiḥ kadāchana."

² To those, for instance, whose supposed "Hindu" sentiment would revive the practice of Satī may be recommended the words of the Mahānirvāṇa

renewed an interest in the teachings of India's great past, and an awakening national spirit has done the rest. The Tantra has had a share in this interest as is manifested in the fair number of Tantras, Tāntrik compendia such as the *Prānaśiṇī*,¹ and other works on the Śāstra (of which that now translated is one), which have been first published or reprinted in recent years. It is a sign of the times to find even a Brāhma publication on the *Ṣaṭcakra*.² This interest is due in part to the general religious revival in progress, and also to the increasing recognition of the necessity of *sādhana* (practice), as distinct from mere philosophizing, if any practical result is to be attained.

According to orthodox views, the Tantra will continue in force until the close of the Kaliyuga, when the golden age (Satya yuga) will reappear, governed by its appropriate Śāstra. The India of to-day is, however, not in the same sense as of yore the "Śrī Bhārata, adored of the Devas" (*Surārchitabhārata*), to which the book now published makes salutation.

The author has many a lament over the changes occurring in what appears to him to be a darkening time.

"If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kāmadeva Tārka, hero most powerful in the field of austerity, or of Gaṇeśa Upādhyāya, whose life was one long surrender to the Mother; or of Rāmaprasāda,³ who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Śakti,⁴ should we in that case have had to sing in Tantra Tattva⁵ the song of all these evil designs (against the Śāstras). But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sādhana-Śāstra, has been shaken."⁶

"Alas! the lion-hearted heroes, pillars of Sanātana Dharma! where are you to-day in this dismal time? That resplendent lustre of yours hallowed by Sādhana, is mingled with the Mantra Śāstra itself. Do ye to-day shed that lustre in every letter, in every accent. Let the Śāstra of

Tantra: "O Kuleśāni, a wife should *not* be burnt with her dead husband. *Every woman is thy image*. Thou residest concealed in the forms of all women in this world (*tava svārūpā ramaṇi jagatyāchchhannavigrahā*). That woman who in her delusion (*moha*) ascends the funeral pyre of her lord *shall go to hell*" (chap. x, verses 79-80).

¹ From the same source comes the *Prānakriṣṇaśabdāmbuddhi*, which I hope to publish.

² *Gāyatrīmūlaka ṣaṭcakraṛvyaṅkāna o sādhanā*, a publication by the Mangala Ganga Mission Press.

³ The celebrated Bengali poet and Śakta.

⁴ Śakti is Devī—that is, both the power of God and God Himself. Each of the Devas has His Śakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

⁵ This book.

⁶ "Principles of Tantra."

Bhārata be again resplendent with the fire of the Tapas¹ of Bhārata's sons."²

But his cause is not wholly lost to him, and he continues to defend it—with a certain spacious splendour of imagery and feeling which belong to a passing world.

"Reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Śāstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine³ events by the force of its own Mantras. Destruction, driving away, and establishment of control,⁴ and such other powers, are still to be daily seen. Hundreds of thousands of great and accomplished Sādhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.⁵ In every cremation ground⁶ in India the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavis⁷ is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged⁸ near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sādhakas' Mantras and made to render aid to Sādhana and Siddhi. Whilst still living in this mortal world Tāntrik Yogīs even now obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the supersensual activities of the world of Devas. She, with dishevelled hair, the dispeller of fear from the hearts of Her devotees, still appears in great cremation grounds,⁹ to give liberation to Her devoted Sādhakas who, made afraid by the fear of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sādhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman by laying their Brahmarandhra¹⁰ at those lotus feet of Brahmamayī,¹¹ which are adored by Brahmā and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain¹² is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sādhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation."¹³

¹ Austerities, etc. (see *Introduction*).

² "Principles of Tantra."

³ Daiva.

⁴ Māraṇam, Uccātanam, Vaśikaraṇam.

⁵ Tapas.

⁶ Smaśāna, where Śavāsana, Muṇḍāsana, Latāsādhana and other Tāntrik rites, are practised.

⁷ Adept Tāntrik men and women.

⁸ Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.

⁹ Mahāsmāśānas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tāntrik Sādhana are practised. The auspicious Kālīkā is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachikurā), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpurādi stotra, verses 3, 10).

¹⁰ The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally.

¹¹ The Devī.

¹² The Devī as daughter of Himavat

The same forces, however, against which this book, as also other orthodoxies, protest, are in conflict both with Hinduism in its present Tāntrik form and with Christianity of the older type. In the present mingling of East and West, each is providing a ferment for the other, which, when all is said, is as much a divine product as the Revelations which it sometimes appears to threaten. The embodied Ātmā, however, *must* ever seek itself revealing its search to us in that which we call the "religious spirit," clothed though It must also be in forms new or renewed¹—its changing expression in a world of unceasing change.

* * * *

For the understanding of the Tāntrik, or, indeed, any other beliefs and practices, the usual dry-as-dust investigation of the savant is insufficient. In the first place a call should be made upon actual present experience. The primary inquiry should be addressed to the ascertainment of the present belief and practice of those whose religious history is under investigation. It is obvious that the course of time effects changes. But whatever these may be, present beliefs are the descendants of those of the past. Much, therefore, which was in the parent will be found in the child. A study of the present will help to an understanding of ancient documents which, if made the sole basis of research, often prove the source of error. For these reasons I have selected a modern exposition of the general basis of Tāntrik doctrine by one who, as its adherent, has inherited its traditions (vaktrādvaktrena). We are now recommencing to value tradition, which everywhere provides the key to truth. It is in all religions of equal if not of greater truth than the imperfect and sometimes falsified documentary evidence we at present possess of their origin and history.

Whatever may be the case upon the purely historical questions which have been raised in connection with the Śāstra, with respect to doctrine and practice, the first and simplest course is to learn from the lips of its living adherents what in fact they are, and, in so far as they can be given, the reason of and authority for them.

Mere book-learning (pustake likitā vidyā), will not carry the student the full way without error. It must be supplemented by information derived from the Tāntrik Ācāryas and Gurus. The truth of learning so gained can only be tested by personal experience.

Hindu beliefs, to be understood aright, should, if possible, be learned both of those who have not, as also of those who have, received an English education. The latter—in the past, at any rate—has generally involved the neglect of, and (prior to the recent national movement) often resulted in a contempt for, all that is ancient and specifically Hindu, whether

in Religion, Literature, or Art.¹ In its tendency it is not only—under its present conditions, at any rate, and whether for good or ill—destructive of tradition, but also in varying degrees of the *mentality* which originally produced the beliefs, and by which alone they may be completely apprehended. Even in cases where competency assumes a favourable attitude towards the ancient teaching, there is often to be found a tendency to read modern ideas into it.

A modern Indian publicist and author² makes upon this matter some very just observations. In treating of the concept “mother” as applied to India by her children, he says that there is no mere metaphor behind it, though most modern educated Hindus understand the word in a poetical and metaphorical sense. “But this is,” he says, “because their education and environment have more or less completely diverted their thought and imagination from the ancient *realities* of their language and literature. There are, indeed, numerous words in common use amongst us to-day that have entirely lost their original sense, *owing to the loss of the genuine thought-life of the people* in the wilderness of un-understood and un-assimilated foreign words and concepts accumulated by our present system of education. *With the Europeanization of our minds and modes of thinking*, even our words have been perceptibly Europeanized.” This criticism has a very extensive application, and one is reminded of it at every step in reading the works of English-educated Hindus on Hindu life and thought, which their prudent reader will in some instances do well to peruse, bearing the above well-founded remarks in mind. As regards his countrymen, the author, in the second part³ of this work, observes: “Nowadays, most of those who represent the ideal type of a learned man in society are considered ignorant and devoid of all sense in the community of the Religious (Sādhakas).” It is also to be remembered that amongst the English-speaking Hindus who have attained success and even distinction there are many who, being of other castes, have neither inherited the traditions of the Brāhmana nor had the benefit of his teaching. Interpretations coming from these classes are likely (though exceptions may exist) to suffer by reason of their ancient disabilities.

The Tantratattva (Principles or subject matter of Tantra), of which the first part⁴ is here translated, is, so far as I am aware, the only

¹ As regards the two former, see the observations in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's valuable “History of Bengali Literature,” published by the Calcutta University. As to Art, a limited residence in India will afford distressing proof.

² Bepin Behary Pal, “The Soul of India,” p. 145.

³ See chapter on Gurukula and Kulaguru.

⁴ The work was originally published in one volume. The second edition has been divided into two parts, of which the first only has been published, the other being, when this was written, in the press. (Publishers' Note: Both the

considerable modern work of its kind. It was written in Bengali by Pandit Śiva Chandra Vidyārṇava Bhattachārya,¹ and first published some twenty years ago, being now in its second edition.

The present work is a defence of the Tantra, of which Śāstra the author is an adherent and a polemic, undertaken in the interests of Hindu orthodoxy in its Śākta and Tāntrika form against Secularism on the one hand, and on the other the religious eclecticism and various "reforming" movements, of which, when the book was first written, the Brāhmasamāji was a leading type. In fact, in parts the book reads like an orthodox Catholic protest against "modernism," and is thus interesting as showing how many fundamental principles are common to all orthodox forms of belief, whether of West or East.

The author of the Tantratattva is a well-known Tāntrik Pandit, preacher, and secretary of the Sarvamangalāsabhā of Benares, who, happily for our purposes, knows no English. His work, which is written in Bengali, may therefore be taken to be an accurate popular statement of modern orthodox views on the subject treated of by him. The word "Tattva" is a very comprehensive one, which it is by no means always easy to translate. I have rendered the title of the book as "Principles of Tantra," though, maybe, as a friend has pointed out, it should be "Subjects of Tantra." The work deals, it is true, with chosen topics of Tantra. This, however, also involves a statement of certain fundamental principles which govern Śāstrik teaching on the subjects dealt with, and this as well as the contents of possible future volumes must be my justification for giving the book a more ambitious title.

The author is both a poet and a preacher—a circumstance which accounts for the rhetorical style and popular devotional character of the work. Apart from such intrinsic merits as it may possess, it is of value as a document which records the thought and workings of an Indian mind affected but little, if at all, by the current notions of the day. It deals in the main, and in a popular way, with the philosophical and religious grounds of the orthodox system in its Śākta form. As regards some of its practical aspects, the author has considered that this was a subject fitter for the reader's Guru than for a book addressed to the public at large. It may therefore have proved a disappointment to those who, at the mention of Tantra, always expect to hear of rituals with wine and women, the midnight circle (Cakra), black magic in the cremation grounds, and so forth. The constant desire to hear of such things is not evidence of a true

¹ Editor of the journal *Śaivi*, and author of several other works—"Gītānī" "Mā" "Svabhāva o abhāva." "Vidyārṇaver durgotsava" "Kartā o

interest in the Śāstra, but a confession of personal weakness.¹ To such it may come as a surprise to learn that the Tantra also concerns itself with matters of undoubted respectability even to its critics, and of universal, if less sensational, interest. It is commonly assumed by such persons (though altogether erroneously) that the Tantra Śāstra is only concerned with the Cakra ritual of those who are called (but incorrectly so) "lefthand" upāsakas, who follow vīrācāra.² This, however, is of course not the fact. On the contrary, the main subjects of Tantra are Mantra and Sādhana in all its forms. It is also the chief repository of Yoga practice, and its general range of subject, as hereafter mentioned, is encyclopædic.

As Professor B. K. Sarkar has well said, the encyclopædias of India known under diverse names, such as Samhitās, Purānas and Tantras, are really generic terms under which the *whole culture* of certain epochs in Indian history found expression and currency. He adds that, while it is difficult and sometimes impossible to assign to such store-houses of information respecting the national life the names of any particular authors or compilers and the question of their dates may never be solved satisfactorily, they furnish undeniable, though sometimes conflicting accounts, of the manners and customs, rites and ceremonies, sects and Sampradāyas, sentiments and traditions, which prevailed among the Hindus for epochs extending over hundreds of years.

The translation is primarily the work of my friend Babu Jñānendralāl Majumdār, himself a Bengali. My own part has consisted in its revision. The translation may read rather cumbrously in parts, but this is due to our desire to keep as close as possible to the somewhat discursive and rhetorical form of the original. I have added some explanatory notes to the text. I should have liked to have made the notes fuller if it could have been done without overloading the text. I have, however, referred in the notes to the Introduction written for my edition of the Mahānirvāna Tantra,³ where I have explained at greater length such terms as "yantra," "mantra," "mudrā," "nyāsa," "panchatattva," the "ṣatcakra," and others, and have in a general and summary way dealt

¹ Inquiry as to these matters is, to use a chess term, a common though bad "opening" for those who have a real desire to know the Śāstra.

² In "Non-Christian Religions," by Howard, pp. 77-78. The author, after a statement that the "Tāntrik System" originated with the Buddhist monk Asanga, says: "*Further than this we must decline to plunge, even with the parts of the Tantra accessible to English readers.*" I am unaware of any parts "accessible to English readers" when this statement was made, and the author was evidently ignorant of any other.

³ The references to the Introduction are, unless otherwise stated, to that

with sādhana, upāsana, and hathayoga. I have retained certain technical Sanskrit terms in the text, as there is no corresponding English word which accurately gives their meaning.

The following pages deal with certain general aspects of the Śāstra, its nature, origin, age, and authority—subjects which were either not then treated of or were more summarily referred to. If upon some of these topics, such as the age of the Śāstra, I have not presented sufficiently certain and detailed conclusions, it is because, for want of the necessary knowledge, I am unable to do so. The subject is a novel one, and possibly many years of inquiry into Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan records¹ will have to be made before opinions of any finality can be formed as to many matters in and touching the Śāstra.

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Current definitions of Tantra as “Sacred writings of the Hindus,” “Scriptures of Śāktas,” “Collections of Magical Treatises,” and the like, are either inaccurate and insufficient, or by their generality useless. A type of such inaccurate statements characterized by the usual vagueness and indecision says that: “The Tantras are a later development of the Puranic creed. They are the writings of Śāktas or votaries of the female energy of some Divinity (*sic*), mostly the wife of Śiva. Such ideas are not altogether absent in the Puranic works. But in the Tantras they assume a peculiar character, owing to the admixture of magic performances and mystic rites of perhaps an indelicate nature. Amarasinha knows not of them.”² In passing, it may be noted that this reference to the Amarakośa is a common one. It is true that the word Tantra is not mentioned in the svargavarga of that book. On the other hand, those who so cite it omit to state that some other ancient Śāstras, including the Atharvaveda, are not there mentioned; and in the Nānārthavarga reference is made to Āgama Śāstra, which is one of the names of Tantra. An anonymous author who writes on what he calls “Transformed Hinduism”³ says, after a description of the Purāṇas, “Another literature of a still more degrading type has been incorporated in the modern Hinduism, and this is the religious books called the Tantras, of which there are sixty-four volumes.”⁴ These books are mostly manuals of mysticism and magic, written otherwise very

¹ Indian tradition connects China and the Tantra, and both Chinese and Tibetan records are reputed to contain Sanskrit works which have long since disappeared from India.

² “History of Classical and Sanskrit Literature,” by M. Krishnacharya, M.A., B.L., p. 34.

³ P. 180.

⁴ The author, in speaking of these “volumes” as he calls them, is thinking of the 64 Tantras assigned to each of the three krāntās, which make them.

much on the same lines as the purāṇas. The religion advocated in these books is the exponent (*sic*) of Śāktism, the wife of Śiva (*sic*), under her various manifestations." Whilst the Indian author last quoted rather vaguely refers to "mystic rites of perhaps an indelicate character" the book now cited more definitely affirms: "It is a licentious worship, and leads to cruelty, self-indulgence, and sensual gratification. Hence it is a blot upon the 'Modern Hinduism.' This sect goes under the name of the Bahm Marges (*sic*), or the secret sect."¹ The Accounts of these and other uninformed authors treat the Tantra as a Śāstra of the Śāktas only where they do not as in the last cited quotation regard it merely as the Śāstra of the Vāmāchāra community of Śākta Sādhakas.

The word Tantra has various meanings, and amongst others Śāstra generally, and therefore does not necessarily denote a religious Śāstra.² In the sense, however, in which the term is most widely known and is here used, it denotes that body of religious scripture (Śāstra which is stated to have been revealed by Śiva as the specific scripture of the fourth or present Kali age (yuga). This is the definition of the Tantra according to the Śāstra itself.

There are four such ages (Mahāyuga)—namely, the Satya yuga, or golden age; the Tretā yuga, age in which righteousness (dharma) decreased by one-fourth; the Dvāpara yuga, in which dharma decreased by one-half; and the present Kali yuga, the most evil of the ages, in which righteousness exists to the extent of one-fourth only. At the close of this last age the Kalki Avatāra of Viṣṇu, "the rider on the white horse," will destroy iniquity and restore the rule of righteousness. Each of these ages has its appropriate Śāstra, or Scripture, which is designed to meet the requirements of the men of each age.

The Hindu Śāstras are classed into Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa, and Tantra. The three last all assume the first as their base, and are, in fact, merely special presentments of it for the respective ages. It has been said that the Tantras "are regarded by those who follow them as a fifth Veda

¹ The author means the vāma mārga, or vāmācāra, as it is ordinarily called. The Tantra does not only deal with this "sect," which is one only of its ācāras, the tenets of which the author does not understand. Dakṣinācāras and others are also followers of Tantra. The work is incorrect both as to the Tantra and other Śāstras and practices of the Hindus which it proposes to "transform."

² Thus in the Śabdaśaktiprakāśikā it is said: "Tarkangtantranchavidushā vidushāngtoshakārikā, kriyate jagadishena"; where Tantra means the theory or science of argument. So the Pañchatantra, which the so-called "Tāntrik Order of America" includes in its *International Journal* amongst the Sanskrit and Tibetan Tantras, is not a Tantra in the sense here dealt with at all, but a book

as ancient as the others and of superior authority.”¹ No Śāstra is or can be superior to the Veda. That practical application of its teachings, however, which is prescribed in the Tantra is to be followed in preference to the vaidikācāra in the Kaliyuga. The relations of the Veda to the Tantra has been compared with that of the Jivātmā to the Paramātmā. The Tantra is said by its adherents to represent the inner core of the former. Professor de la Vallée Poussin says²: “ Si l’on veut instituer une comparaison qui d’ailleurs n’est pas sans danger on sera frappé des *ressemblances inaperçues* qui permettent de rapprocher ces deux manifestations si différentes de la pensée Hindoue, le Védisme et le Tantrisme.” These resemblances which struck the learned author are, of course, due to the fact that there is a base common to the Veda and the Tantra, the latter being, according to orthodox notions, a branch of the Vaidik tree. It is only those who would altogether disassociate the Tantra from the Veda who will experience any surprise at finding resemblances between the Śāstras for the respective ages. As the Kulārṇava Tantra says, for each age (yuga) a suitable Śāstra is given—namely, in Satyayuga, Śruti; in Tretā, Smṛti; in Dvāpara the Purāṇas; and in the Kali age the Tantra.³ The truth to be taught ever remains the same, though the method of inculcating it varies with the ages. Current definitions, when not incorrect, fail to bring out this character of the Tantra as a Yuga (age) Śāstra and its relations to the other Scriptures. As, however, our author well says⁴ it is by no means impossible that now towards the end of the Kali age a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches.

The original and highest source of dharma is Śruti, or that “ which has been heard,” and which is the *īpsissima verba* of divine revelation. The Vedas are apauruṣeya (without any personal composer), manifested to the Ṛṣis who were not their authors, but only their Seers (draṣṭārah). The term “ Śruti ” is sometimes used in (what is to some) an extended sense, as where Kulluka Bhatta speaks of Tantra (which has sometimes been described as the fifth Veda) as Śruti (vaidikī tāntrikīchaiva dvidividhā kīrttitā Śrutiḥ). Popularly, however, the term is limited to the four Vedas—Ṛk, Sāma, Yajus, and Atharva—and the Upaniṣads, of which,

¹ Beveridge, “ History of India,” ii. 77. And to the same effect “ Biblical, etc., Encyclopædia,” McClintock and Strong, xii, 864.

² Bouddhisme Études et Matériaux.

³ Krite śrutyuktāchāraṣṭretāyāṅg smṛtisambhavaḥ

Dvāpare tu purāṇoktang kalau āgamakevalam.

See also Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verse 28, and Kubjikā Tantra, where Śruti, Smṛti, and Purāṇa are assigned to the first three ages, and Tantra to the fourth.

⁴ See *post*. And as to the relation of Āgama and Veda, see Mahābhāga-

Professor Paul Deussen says: "Die Upaniṣads, sind für den Veda was für die Bibel das neue Testament ist."¹ In its primary signification the term "Vedānta" means the latter part of the Veda. The Jñānakāṇḍa of the Vedas is therefore the Vedānta in the original sense of the word. As such it is Śruti, and therefore in this sense the Vedānta is identical with the Upaniṣads, which teach as the gist of Vaidik doctrine the knowledge of the Absolute Being (Paramātmā) and union with It. The Devas worshipped in the Mantras of the Karmakāṇḍa are, as well as the whole visible universe, but manifestations of It—the "Tat Sat," or the Reality. Based on Upaniṣad is the Vedānta Darśana, or philosophy embodied in the Vedānta Sūtras ascribed to Vyāsa, which have again been the subject of the commentaries known as Śaṅkarabhāṣyam (of Śaṅkarācārya), Śrībhāṣyam (of Rāmānuja), Mādhvabhāṣyam (of Madhva), and the less important Govindabhāṣyam.

Smṛti is "that which is remembered," and has been handed down by Ṛṣis. It is regarded as the expression of the Divine Will conveyed to mankind by inspiration through the agency of human beings. It is divided into the Śrauta sūtras, dealing with Vaidik ceremonies, and the Gṛhya sūtras, concerning the household rites; the prose Dharma sūtras, which lay down rules of law properly so called (of which there are various caranas or schools, such as those of Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Vaśīṣṭah, and others), and Dharma Śāstras, or metrical versions of previously existing dharma-sūtras, such as the Code of Manu (Manu-smṛti), the Yājñavalkya, Nārada, Parāśara Smṛtis, and other fragmentary Dharma Śāstras and secondary Smṛtis of later periods. On these Smṛtis there are various commentaries, such as those of Medhātithi, Kulluka Bhatta, and others on the Manu Smṛti; the commentaries on the Yājñavalkya Smṛti by Vijnāneśvara (known as the Mitākṣarā), and others; commentaries on the Parāśara Smṛti; and other commentaries such as those on the Mitākṣarā. These commentaries have given rise to various schools of law, such as the Mitākṣarā, Dāyabhāga, Mithilā, and others. Smṛti provides for pravritti dharma, as the Upaniṣads had revealed the path of nivritti, or, as it is loosely called, "renunciation."

The third Śāstra, that of the Dvāpara yuga, is that contained in the Purāṇas, the principal of those now extant being eighteen in number.² They by myth and story convey in an exoteric manner the doctrines of the

¹ "Die Geheimlehre des Veda" (1909).

² The Viṣṇu Bhāgavata (it is a matter of dispute whether this is the Śrīmadbhāgavata or Devī Bhāgavata, both of which are largely quoted in this book); Nāradiya; Garuḍa; Padma; Varāha; or Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas; Śiva, Liṅga, Skanda, Agni (or, according to other accounts, Vāyu), Matsya, Kūrma; or Śaiva Purāṇas; the Brahma, Brahmānda, Brahmavaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhaviṣya, and Vāmana Purāṇas.

Vedas to the declining intelligence and spirituality of the men of the third age. Like, however, the Tantra, they deal with nearly every subject of knowledge—theogonies, cosmogonies, genealogies, chronology, the astronomical, physical, and other sciences. In addition to the Mahāpurāṇas, there are the secondary Purāṇas or Upapurāṇas.¹ Both of these are referred to in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, when dealing with the Śāstra of the different ages, as Samhitā. This word, which literally means “collection,” and, according to the Śabdaratnāvali, includes Dharma Śāstra, Smṛti, Śrutijīvikā, also comprises² Purāṇa, Upapurāṇa, Itihāsa (history such as Māhābhārata and Rāmāyana), the work of Vālmīki, Vaśiṣṭha, and others.

The specific Śāstra for the fourth or Kaliyuga (according to orthodox views, the present age) is the Tantra. Though there are Āgamas or Tantras which are called Śiva and Śākta or Devī (according to the particular form of the One which is regarded therein as Iṣṭadevatā), it is, according to orthodox notions, a mistake to regard the Tantra generally as if it were a petty Śāstra of any particular division of Hindu worshippers. It is said, on the contrary, to be a universal Śāstra governing all men in the Kali age, though particular provisions in it may have reference to particular divisions of worshippers. Thus, while certain communities who perform the rahasyapūjā make use of wine in worship, others do not, and it is, in fact, forbidden to them by the Tantra itself, as is the specific Śaktipūjā associated with such use. So the Nityā Tantra prohibits the latter in the case of the Paśu³ (rātrau naiva yajeddevīṅ sandhyāyāṅ vāparāṇhake). On the other hand, other portions of the Tantra govern the whole orthodox Hindu community. So not only the Śakti mantra, but also the Viṣṇu and Śiva mantras are Tāntrik. The Tāntrika Sandhyā may be said by all, and the Śāstra is the source of the bulk of the generally current ritual. A remark of a friend who read the first part of this book, “that he could find little of the Tantra in it,”⁴ is typical of the general misconceptions which prevail as to the nature of the Śāstra.

It is true that the so-called “Śākta” Tantras prescribe, in the case of one of the Ācāras, a form of sādhana peculiar to this ācāra known as the Panchatattva,⁵ or worship with wine, meat, fish, grain, and woman

¹ Kālikā, Sanatkumāra, Nārasiṅha, and others.

² See Brahmapurāṇa, Jñānakhaṇḍa, chap. cxxxii.

³ Because such worship connotes maithuna, which is not for the paśu on the path of pravṛtti, and who is still in the heavy bonds of desire.

⁴ Because it does not deal with those portions of the Tantra which are concerned with the Panchatattva, virācāra, etc.

⁵ This is the term used by Tāntriks themselves in speaking of the conjoined elements. Usually they are called the “five M’s” (pañcamakāra), because

(Śakti): and not uncommonly the Tantra is associated with such worship only, with the result that a "Tāntrik" has come to connote, in the minds of many, merely a Hindu who practises this Sādhana. Less narrow and crude notions popularly associate the Tantra with the Śākta cult only, though they would include all forms of worship within the Śākta community, and do not limit the scope of governance of the Tantra to the community of Vāmācārins worshipping with the rājasika Panchatattva. The reason for such views appears to be this: Though there may have been Śaiva Tantras, as there have been what are called Śaiva Purāṇas, and there are Tantras such as the Rādhā Tantra, which deal with the Viṣṇu cult; and though in ordinary worship there is adoration of the "Five Devatās"¹ (Panchopāsanā), yet in those scriptures which are more usually referred to when the Tantra is spoken of, the worship of Śakti assumes a more special form. All such notions, however, as regards Tantra, though popular, bespeak according to its followers a fundamental misconception of the scope of the Śāstra.² Properly speaking, a Tāntrik should be defined as one who is governed by and follows the provisions of Tantra which are applicable to his particular case. In 1881 Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra³ wrote that the followers of Tantra might be reckoned by the hundreds of thousands, and that the life of many an Indo-Aryan (he might have said, in one way or another, practically all) was that of "bondage to its ordinances." As a Yuga Śāstra, the Tantra claims to govern all orthodox communities of worshippers in the Kaliyuga. But this does not mean that all its provisions are applicable to each one of them. The contrary is the case. There are some matters, such as Mantratattva, which are of common applicability to all such communities. There are other matters which are peculiar to, and govern only, a particular community or section of it. But both the common and special provisions have the same Śāstra as their source. It

each of the ordinary names of the elements commences with that letter (madya, māṅsa, matsya, mudrā, maithuna). Some of these have, however, esoteric names used by Tāntriks amongst themselves. "Latā Sādhana" is a better and in some cases more accurate description of the fifth tattva than the word "maithuna" with its vulgar implications.

¹ Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, and the Devī.

² According to the views (whether historically justifiable or not) of Tantrik Pandits with whom I have discussed this matter, it is not as though there were separate and conflicting Śāstras, but one Śāstra—the Tantra with different sections appropriate to the various divisions in the community of worshippers. So, again, the Purāṇas constitute one body of Śāstra, though any particular Purāṇa may appear to give support to a sectarian hypothesis by reason of its emphasizing the cult of some particular Devatā.

³ "Indian Arvans" (1893), vol. i, p. 404.

is, however, not here meant that every practice followed by the orthodox¹ communities is of Tāntrik origin. Some rites, such as that of Homa, have descended from Vaidik times. Others are of modern origin. Thus, to take one instance from amongst others: the Vaiṣnavas sing and dance and recite the name of Hari (Viṣṇu) in Kirtans which are of a popular and emotional character. This mode of worship was introduced by the great Chaitanya Deva to meet the needs of his time, and has nothing in common with the formal and intellectual character of the Tāntrik ritual. As to this, the author says:² "When Chaitanya Deva deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brāhmana, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya families were on the verge of ruin. He thought that in the then state of society, full of middle-class (Navaśākha) Śūdras, incompetent for either the Vaidik or Tāntrik dharma, Harinām sangkirtana³ was the best form of dharma (religion), and consequently he preached that dharma." Though some may nowadays be disposed, through ignorance or other reasons, to dispute their connection with the Śāstra, the matter may be put to some very simple tests. If such a disputant be orthodox (whether Śaiva, Vaiṣnava, or Śākta), he might, if he would answer such a question, be asked whether he has been initiated, and, if so, in what form—what mantra he then received, and where that mantra comes from.⁴ And then, when worshipping before an image⁵ in Sākāra upāsana, with the sixteen articles of worship (ṣoḍaśa upacāra), inquiry may be made as to the authority for such image-worship, and in what Śāstra this ritual and the rules relating to Nyāsa, Bhūtaśuddhi, and so forth, is to be found. The answer in all these and similar cases will be the Tantra. On the other hand, as above stated, certain provisions of the Śāstra may have no applicability to a particular Sādhaka. As the Iṣṭadevatā of the various religious communities differs, so in some respects does the pūja and sādhana. The Basil leaf (tulsi) is sacred to Viṣṇu; the Bael (bilva) to Śiva; the Scarlet hibiscus or China Rose to

¹ I thus exclude all the little sects, some of a very peculiar and original character, with which India abounds, though sometimes loosely affiliated, or claiming to be affiliated, to the larger one; such as, apparently, the Chaliya Pantha of Jodhpur, which Sellon, in his Annotations, calls "Kauchiluas."

² See *post*.

³ The singing of Viṣṇu's (Hari's) name with music and dancing. Among the Vaiṣnavas there is a good deal of worship of a congregational character.

⁴ Thus in the Viṣṇu mantra "Kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa Gopāla," Kṛṣṇa is a Tāntrik bija which is to be found in no other Śāstra but the Tantra. In the same way, in the Kṛṣṇa mantra, given in the notes (see *post*), Aṅga and Śrīṅga are Tāntrik bijas.

⁵ I include under this term not merely the image strictly so-called, but also the jar (ghata) in Devī worship, and the lingam and śalagrāma in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava upāsana, respectively.

the Devī. Whilst animal sacrifice is made to Kālī, it is forbidden in the worship of the aspect of the One which is named Viṣṇu. The use of the rājasika pancatattva is prescribed for Śākta initiates in Vāmācāra. It is forbidden to the Śākta non-initiate, and to other communities of worshippers. But both the injunctions and the prohibitions have as their authority the same Śāstra,¹ which governs in some way or other all orthodox communities.

In short, it is considered an error to regard the Tantra as the petty Śāstra of any religious sect only, and a still greater mistake to limit its operation to that which is but one only of its particular methods or divisions of worshippers (ācāras).

As mentioned later, the Tantra deals with all matters of common belief and interest, from the doctrine of the origin of the world to the laws which govern kings and the societies which they have been divinely appointed to rule, medicine and science generally. The Tantra is not only the basis of popular Hindu practice, on which account it is known as the Sādhana Śāstra, but it is the repository of esoteric belief and practices, particularly those relating to yoga and mantra-tattva. Indeed, as regards the last, which is one of the most peculiar, and at the same time most profound, aspects of Hindu teaching, the Tantra is to such an extent the acknowledged repository of this spiritual science that its other name is the Mantra Śāstra. Its claims to such a name could not have been made good were there not some ground for its assertion that it is a Yuga Śāstra for the Kali age. As to which Tantras, however, are authoritative there appear to be differences of opinion, such differences being due either to a mistaken sectarianism, or possibly to real divergences as regards doctrinal thought and historical descent.

The Tantras are referred to as Āgamas. An Indian author² and student of the Śaivāgama expresses the opinion that the Āgamas have branched out from the same stem of the Vaidik tree which produced the earlier Upaniṣads, and were at one time as widespread in India as the Upaniṣads themselves; that, like the Upaniṣads, the Āgamas also became in course of centuries the basis of a number of "creeds" which, unanimous in accepting the essentials of the Āgamic teaching, were divergent as regards rituals, observances, and minor essential details. He says: "The

¹ This is overlooked in the common, though erroneous, appellation—"right hand" and "left hand" worship, used in a sense as if the two had no Śāstric connection with one another. The worship is not "right" and "left" in the sense of "proper" and "improper," orthodox and heterodox. Each is a recognized form of worship, presented by the "Tantra" for differing grades of its Sādhakas. Each has a common authority. Therefore no follower of the Tantra which prescribes these two ācāras thus speaks of them.

² Dr. V. V. Ramana Śāstrin, in his Introduction to J. M. Nallaswami

Āgamas contend that they constitute the truest exegesis of the Vedas, and their origins are certainly as ancient as those of some of the classical Upaniṣads. If the Fire worship be regarded as the ritual inculcated in the Vedas as the outer symbolism of spiritual truths, the temple worship may, on its side, be also said to assume a similar importance in regard to the Āgamas. For the rest, it will be seen that in India at the present day there is hardly a Hindu who does not observe some kind of temple worship or another, which points to the conclusion that the Āgamas have had, in one form or another, an universal hold upon the continent of Hindu India, and that their influence tells." The principles and ritual of Śaivism are said to be determined by the Āgamas or Tantras, which are twenty-eight in number, from Kāmika to Vatula.

According to some, the Vedas, issued from four out of the five mouths of Śiva and the Tantra of the "higher tradition" (ūrdhvhvāmnāya) from His central or fifth mouth. The other Tantra is said by some to have proceeded from the current issuing "below the navel"¹ of the Deva. According to another account, all the mouths of Śiva gave issue to those Tantras which spring from the "upward current," and the others are the produce of the downward current "below the navel".² According, however, to both versions a distinction is made between the two classes of tradition. In the Lalitā Sahasranāma, Bhāskara-rāya, commenting on the Śloka in which the Devī is addressed as Nijājñārūpā Nigama, (the "Nigama are the expression of Thy commands"), says:³ "Athavā śanti vedānuyāyīni śaivatāntrāni kāmikādīnyaṣṭāvingsatih vedaviruddhāni⁴ kāpālabhairavādīni cha teṣu vaidikāni nigamapadavācyāni parameśvarasya mukhādudbhūtatvādājñārūpāni napunarnābhyadho bhagādutpannāni vedaviruddhānityarthah." He there, referring to the Devī Bhāgavata and Skanda Purānas, states that there are twenty-eight Śaiva Tantras commencing with Kāmika which adhere to the Vaidik injunctions, as there are others commencing with Kāpāla, Bhairava, etc, (assigned by him to the "downward current"), which do not, and the reference in the Lalitā to Nigama is, according to his views, to the former class. As they sprang from the mouth of Parameśvara, they are said to be the form of the Devī's commands. The five Tantras, commencing with Kāmika sprang from the sadyojāta face of Śiva. From the other four faces—viz., the vāmadeva, aghora, tatpuruṣa, and īśāna—sprang respectively the five Tantras, Dīpta, and others of its class, the five Vijaya and

¹ See *post*.

² See as to the meaning of these expressions *post*.

³ Verse 67.

⁴ As to whether the rahasyapūjā of the Tantra is opposed to the Veda, see *post*. In similar fashion Aufrecht (see Adikarmapradīpa) says: "Subbagama appellata a via Vedis præscripta non descendunt ideoque samayachara-

others, the five Vairocana and others, and the eight Tantras Prodigata and others. These twenty-eight are said to have sprung from the "upward current," and the others from the current issuing "below the navel".¹ The Kāmika identifies these twenty-eight Śaiva Tantras or Āgamas with various parts of the body of the Devī, Her ornaments and garments; and all other auxiliary and supplementary Tantras with the hair on Her body. For the body of the great Īśvarī, who is one with Īśvara Her Lord, is contemplated upon under the form of all the Tantras (Sarvatantrarūpā). The same commentator,² citing the Kūrma Purāṇa, observes:

"Yāni śāstrāni drīṣyante lokesmin vividhāni tu
 Śrutismṛtivrūddhāni dvaitavādaratāni cha
 Kāpālang bhairavangchaiva sakalang gautamang matam
 Evangvidhāni chānyāni mohanārthāni tani tu
 Ye kuśāstrābhīyogena mohayantīva mānavān
 Mayā śrīṣṭāni śāstrāni mehāyaishhāng bhavāntare."

In another place Devī says to Himavat: "Whatsoever Scriptures are found opposed to Śruti and Smṛti devoted to dualism—viz., Kāpāla, Bhairava, Sakala, Gautama, and similar ones—exist for the purpose of bewilderment.³ Those who are confused by false scriptures also confuse the world. These were all created by me for the sake of bewilderment."⁴

In the passage cited from the Lalitā, Bhāskara-rāya refers to the Śaivāgamas or Śaiva Tantras, and, according to his apparently sectarian view, the other Tantras are those which proceed from "below the navel".

There are, however, what are called Śākta Tantras, and to these the term Tantra is more commonly applied, because in this form they have been perhaps more known and spoken of. According to the view of the author cited, the "Śaivāgamas are not related to the Śākta Tantras by any organic community of thought or descent".⁵ Whatever be the historical basis of this conclusion, which is not stated, it is to be noted (for the thought is profound) that in the passage from the Lalitā, though different types of Tantra are said to have sprung from different currents, they are yet both represented as issuing from the body of the God. Śiva

¹ Ūrddhasrotobhavā ete nābhyadhasrotasah parah; the former existing in the chaste (ūrddharetas), whose "stream of life" (retas) tends upwards.

² Lalitā, verse 137.

³ The Devī is, while the great Liberatrix, also the "all-bewildering" (Sarvamohinī). When devoid of Her grace, men are bewildered by Her Māyā.

⁴ Similar language is used as regards the Atheistic School in chap. lxxvii of the Kālikā Purāṇa, which says: "Vāmah kayobrahma nopi māngsa-modyādibhuktaye, kritomayā mohanāya chārṇvākādi pravarttakah." The reference here is to the nāstika doctrines of Chārṇvāka and his followers.

is represented as the author of all Āgamas. There is, in fact, but one source whence all forms of religion, as all else, come. If the ray of pure sāttvik light appears to be variously coloured, or even at times clouded or obscured, it is not by reason of the alteration of its nature, but of the disturbing and darkening qualities of the other guṇas constituting the Devī's substance manifesting in the Jīva. It is not without reason that Śiva, the Friend of all, is represented as surrounded by Bhūta and the demoniac hosts. If the Devī, as Vidyā, liberates, by Her Māyā (from which the religious sense no more than any other is free), She also binds. The sectarian, whether a Śaiva or other, naturally discovers abundance of this māyik play in the creed of his neighbour which he condemns. I doubt myself whether there exists at present material for conclusions of any degree of certainty as to the historical origin of the so-called Śākta Tantras. Certainly no one has yet collected such as may exist. They are, however, I believe, at base (whatever may be the accretions they are said by some to have received) an outcome from the same Vaidik source, the Mother of all Dharma, as the Śaiva Tantras, though, having regard to the difference of ācāra, they may derive from this common source in different form.

That which is commonly regarded as telling against this conclusion is the vīrācāra ritual with the Pancatattva. It is said¹ by a modern Śaivite that the Śaivāgamas prohibit drink and the eating of flesh. Though we may recall both Vaidik usage and the curse of Bhṛgu on those who follow the rites of Bhava: Viśantu śivadikṣayām yatra daivam surāsavam;² this prohibition is in accordance with the provisions of the "Śākta" Tantras, which limit the ritual use of wine and flesh to the worshippers of Śakti initiate in vāmācāra.

That the provisions of Tantra which relate to the Pancatattva are opposed to the Veda is a notion which is declared by the Indian Tāntrik pandits to be erroneous. Manu says:

"Na māṅsabhaḥṣane doṣo na madye na cha maithune,
Pravrittireṣā bhūtānāṃ nivrittiṣṭu mahāphalā."³

"There is no wrong in the eating of meat, nor in the drinking of wine, nor in sexual intercourse; for these things are natural to men. At the same time abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit."

¹ Śaiva Siddhānta, 315, v. ante.

² Bhāgavata Purāṇa, cited in Muir, S.O.T., 377-382.

³ So also the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: "Eating and sexual union, O Devī, are desired by and natural to men, and their use is regulated for their benefit in the ordinances of Śiva."

"Nṛināṅ svabhāvajang devī priyang bhojanamaithunam
Samkṣepāṇā hitārthāyā śaivadharmme nirūpitam."

He is doubtless there referring to those enjoyments which belong to the Pravṛtti Mārga—the use of meat and fermented liquor during the Vaidik age being well known. But such use formed also a part of its sacrificial and ritual system. As regards Latāsādhana, the Kālikopaniṣad of the Atharvaveda and other Śāstras are relied on as authorities by Tāntrik Pandits in support of the Virācāra ritual. It is unnecessary to deal with this ritual here, as its discussion forms no part of the author's work. Not improbably (in part at least) originating in a doctrine intended for the detached non-dualistic initiate,¹ and kept closely secret,² it may have been perverted by the vulgar, to whom some portions of it became later known. The abuses of these commoner people, as time went on, developed such proportions as to ultimately obscure all other matters in the Tantra, thus depriving them of that attention which is their due.

The objections, however, which have been made to the Tāntrik rahasyapūjā have probably been the chief cause of the attack made upon the age and authority of the Śāstra. It would be beyond the limits of a general Introduction such as this to enter at length into this difficult and debated question. As the view which is to be found more commonly stated is adverse to the Śāstra on both these points, it may be shortly pointed out that the Tantra is referred to in works of acknowledged authority such as the Śrīmadbhāgavata, the celebrated Vaiṣṇava Śāstra, the Devī Bhāgavata (which in the ninth skanda speaks of it as a Vedāṅga), and in the Varāha, Padma, Skanda, and other Purāṇas. In the first-named work Bhagavān says: "My worship is of three kinds, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (miśra)," and in the fifth chapter of the eleventh skanda of the same work it is said that Keśava assumes different forms in the different Yugas, and should be worshipped in different ways, and that in Kaliyuga he is to be worshipped according to the injunctions of Tantra. The great Śaṅkarācārya recognizes the Śāstra in his Ānanda Laharī and Śāktāmoda, as does Ānanda Tīrtha, the commentator of Pūrṇaprajñadarśana. The Śāstra is frequently quoted in the celebrated work on Smṛti, the Aṣṭāvīṃśati-tattva of Raghunandana, which is itself universally accepted as an authority throughout Bengal. In short, as the Veda issued from the mouth of Brahmā, so the Āgama Śāstra is said to have come from that of

¹ Thus, as regards worship with woman (Latāsādhana), it is said that it is not possible for one who is a dualist devoid of the knowledge of Kula, and addicted to sexual intercourse, to duly follow Śiva's mandate. Hell follows lust. As the Tantrasāra says, "Liṅgayonirato mantrī rauravang narakang brajet" ("The Mantrin addicted to lust goes to the Raurava Hell")—that is, the hell in which the qualities of the fiery tejas tattva exist in painful excess.

Sadāśiva.¹ Current objections to the Tantra on the ground that it lacks the authority of Śruti, Smṛti, or Purāṇa, and is of more recent date, are based, according to orthodox views, on a misconception. According to those views, all Śāstras are without beginning and eternal, as indeed in one sense they are, though their phenomenal appearance may be successive. Letters or sounds are the sensuous manifestation of words, the essence of which resides in the *sphoṭa* or conception which existed from all eternity before ever these sounds or words were uttered. The phenomenal appearance of Tantra postdates the other Śāstras in the same sense as that in which the Kaliyuga is said to succeed to the earlier ages of the present Mahāyuga. There is, in fact, but one truth variously presented to the respective ages. So the Tantra has been said to exist in the Veda as the perfume exists in the flower. While the theoretical portion of the Gāyātrī Tattva is contained in the Vedānta, the practical and ritualistic portion is in the Tantra. Both the theoretical exposition and practical application of universal principles varies with the needs of the ages and the Jīva living therein. It is said of the Devī: "Many are the paths which vary according to the Śāstras but all leading to fruition (*siddhi*) merge in Thee alone, as all rivers merge and are lost in the sea."

For orthodox views on this matter I will here refer the reader to our author and to a recent essay on the "Antiquity of the Tantra," by Mahāmahopādhyāya Jādaveśvara Tarkaratna.² The Pandit prefaces the matter by a notice of the views generally entertained by what are called "educated" Indians, which he summarizes as follows: They hold, he tells us, that the Tantras are of recent production; that to the Vaidik age succeeded the Upaniṣadik. Then followed the Paurāṇik age, and then, quite recently, that of the Tantras. But even then the latter Śāstra was not of general authority, having neither governance nor influence in other parts of India than Bengal, where alone it was predominant. There it was created by Bengali Pandits upon the model of the Buddhist teaching and practice of the Mahāyāna sect.³ These Bengali Pandits are also alleged to have incorporated therewith the worship of Śakti, the goddess of the aboriginal barbarian inhabitants of Bengal. The date of many of the Tantras is said to fall within the last three hundred years, and, amongst other proofs of this, reference is made to the fact that the Yoginī Tantra mentions the name of the founder of the Coochbehar Raj, which was established within that time.

¹ Some other authorities will be found cited in the later pages of this book; and I summarize in the following pages the opinion of Mahāmahopādhyāya Jādaveśvara Tarkaratna, in his article on the antiquity of Tantra (*Tantr-prācīnatva*) in the *Sāhitya Samhitā* of Assin, 1317.

These objections are then classified under four headings: (1) The Tantra is not an ancient Dharma Śāstra of the Āryan race having effect in all parts of India, but was in force in Bengal alone, being, indeed, an invention of the Bengalis, who naturally honoured their own creation. (2) Amongst Mahāyāna Buddhists there is worship of Tārā, Vajrayoginī, Kṣetrapāla, and the use of mantras, bijas, and japa, in the cult of such Devatās. There is similar worship in the Tantra, which must therefore be derived from Mahāyāna Buddhism. (3) Aboriginal tribes are worshippers of Śakti, ghosts, snakes, and trees. The Tantras also deal with such worship, and have therefore adopted the worship of such aborigines. (4) A book which relates an incident which took place not more than three hundred years ago cannot itself be older.

To these objections the Mahāmahopādhyāya replies as follows: As to the first, he rejoins that Tāntrik influences are to be found, not only in Bengal, but throughout India. Just as the Bengalis of the higher castes are divided into Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas, and Śaivas, so it is with the peoples of Kāmarūpa, Mithilā, Utkala, and Kalinga, and the Kāshmirian pandits. The Śakti mantra, Śiva mantra, and Viṣṇu mantra, are each Tāntrik. Amongst Dākṣiṇātyas,¹ Mahāmahopādhyāya Subramanya Śāstri, and many others, are Śāktas. The late Mahāmahopādhyāya Rāma Miśra Śāstri, Mahāmahopādhyāya Rāma Śāstri Bhāgavatācārya, and many others, were and are Vaiṣṇavas. Mahāmahopādhyāya Śivakumāra Śāstri, and a number of others, are Śaivas. In Brindāvan there are many Śakta as well as Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇas, though amongst the higher castes in Mahārāṣṭra and other Southern Indian countries, Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas are more numerous than Śāktas. Followers of the Pāśupata and Jangama cults are Śaivas whereas those of Mādhavācārya and Rāmāṇujācārya are Vaiṣṇavas. Many in the North-west are initiated in the Rāma mantra, which is to be found only in the Tantra. It is still more remarkable that, according to this author, the pandās of Śrī Puruṣottama² are all Śāktas, and the priests of Kāmākhyā Devī³ are all Vaiṣṇavas.

Passing to the second argument, he denies that similarity between two doctrines and practices is necessarily proof that the first is borrowed from the second. It may equally be argued the other way. If, because the Buddhists worship Tārā, Hayagrīva and others with dhyānas and bijas similar to those in the Tantra, it is contended that the latter is derived from the former, it may equally well be urged that such Buddhist worship is taken from the Tantra. If the Hindu mind was moved by and drawn

¹ Pandits of Southern India.

² Jagannātha at Puri.

to the touching teachings of Buddhism, why, he asks, should it concern itself with the externals, and not with the fundamental principles of the religion to which it is so attracted? Why should the Hindu, instead of striving for Nirvāṇa, stand before Buddhist images, fashioned after Buddhist models, and with folded palms pray for beauty, victory, glory, and the destruction of foes? There is obviously a great difference between yoga undertaken for the extinction of all desires, and such prayers to the Deity for wealth and the destruction of foes, as form part of the Vaidik religion. The Bhagavadgītā preaches niṣkāma karma,¹ which, with the pursuit of spiritual knowledge leads to the acquisition of such knowledge, and thereafter to Nirvāṇa; and on this account the "educated" say that the Gītā is influenced by Buddhistic ideals. In the Tantra there is performance of work with desire, which is contrary to Buddhist teaching. Hinduism alone, of all religions, provides different forms of religious teaching for persons of differing religious competence (adhikāra). Buddhism does not. How, otherwise, is it possible to account for Buddhadeva's vairāgya,² his loss of faith in Hinduism, and his discovery of the new path whereby man shall escape the infirmities of old age and death? Buddhism, out of pity for all living creatures, forbids the sacrifice of animals. It is, he thinks, an astonishing proposition that Tāntrikas followed such a religion, when at the same time they are supposed to have invented a novel Śāstra, enjoining the sacrifice of goats, buffaloes, and other animals, before images of Devas and Devīs, also drawn from Buddhism. While it is not to be expected that all will understand the complexities of Buddhist philosophy, pity is a virtue which goes with humble minds. If there be anything which might prove attractive in Buddhism to men in general, it is its prohibition against the slaughter of animals—an ordinance which melted the hearts of a large number of the Hindus and made them Buddhists. It is scarcely probable, then, that Hinduism should omit that which is fundamentally attractive in a religion which (in his view) denies the existence of God, and should inaugurate a new Śāstra (the Tantra) providing for the worship of Devas and Devīs, according to the tenets of the Buddhist Mahāyāna school. It is modern Vaiṣṇavism, on the contrary, which, in its prohibition of animal sacrifice, is inspired by the Buddhistic principle that "cessation from the killing of animals is the highest form of religion". In the great yajña, which lasted a hundred years, Śaunaka and other Ṛṣis used to listen to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata from the mouth of Sūta, and at the same time to sacrifice animals.³ In the Aśvamedha yajña which King Yudīṣṭhira, the disciple of Kṛṣṇa, performed under the guidance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself, a horse

¹ The performance of work selflessly, without desire for its fruit.

was killed, offered to Devas, and eaten. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself hunted a boar under the command of Vāsudeva for the satisfaction of the Pitṛs in Śrāddha. The eleventh skanda of the Bhāgavata¹ explicitly states that the killing of animals in sacrifice is no killing.

Amongst the Vaiśyas of Mathurā, many had become Buddhists, and others Jains. Greatly moved as they were at the sight of Chaitanya's love for Kṛṣṇa, and drawn thereby to Hinduism, they yet hesitated to return to it on the ground that it sanctioned the slaughter of animals in sacrifice. It was perhaps at that time that the Vaiṣṇava teachers announced that the killing of animals was not sanctioned by their tenets, and thus succeeded in converting Buddhists and Jains to their faith. It is probably from this time that Vaiṣṇava families abandoned animal sacrifice on occasions of pūjā. Although common Vaiṣṇavas eat fish, the flesh of other animals is forbidden. In Bengal, Utkala, and other countries, Buddhist teachers adapted from Hinduism the establishment of images of Devas, the worship of such Devas with mantras and bijas, and called themselves Mahāyāna Buddhists—a sect which, of course, came into existence long after the passing away of the Buddha. The Lalitavistāra,² or biography of Śākyasingha, states that he had a special knowledge of Nigama, Purāṇas, Itihāsa, and the Vedas. Whenever both Veda and Nigama are mentioned in the same passage, the latter term refers to Tantra, which goes by the names of Āgama and Nigama.³

Again, Śākyasingha is made to say to the Bhikṣukas.⁴ "Such fools seek the protection of, and pay obeisance to, Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Viṣṇu, the Devī, Kārtikeya, Mother Kātyāyanī, Gaṇapati, and others. Some perform tapasyā in cremation grounds, and at the crossing of four roads."⁵ Speaking of the practice of heretics (pāṣāṇḍas), Śākyasingha mentions the use of wine and flesh. Had not the Tāntrik form of worship been then in existence how could he have known and spoken ill of it?⁶ Seeing, also, what the Lalitavistāra says, can it, he asks, be contended that the Tantra is derived from Mahāyāna Buddhism?

To the third objection the Mahāmahopādhyāya answers that the views there expressed are similar to those given under the second heading, and the rejoinder, therefore, is similar. It may, however, he says, be

¹ XI, Chapter v, śloka xiii.

² Chapter xii.

⁴ Buddhist Sannyāsis.

³ *Vide ante.*

⁵ Lalitavistāra, chap. xvii.

⁶ This, of course, does not necessarily follow. All that is here proved is that Tāntrik practices antedated the Lalitavistāra, whatever be the date at which the latter was written. From the standpoint of Western criticism this and all similar orthodox arguments are weakened by the too ready credit sometimes given to the age and authority of the literary materials on which they

Bhattachārya, the great Smārta, and Kṛṣṇānanda Bhattachārya, contemporaries of Śrī Chaitanya, referred to and quoted it as an authority in the Smṛtitattva and Tantrasāra. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that if in some obscure family a great person (mahā-puruṣa), or a succession of great persons, is born, their descendants and disciples name the members of that family after those of some other well-known family, so as to create the notion that the two families are the same. It was perhaps in this way he surmises that the Rāj family of Cooch Behār was raised to the position of being the descendants of Śiva mentioned in the Yoginī Tantra.

Mādhavācārya, the commentator upon the Vedas, has, in dealing with the Pātañjala Darśana in his compilation of the six Darśanas, quoted many passages from the Tantra Śāstra with reference to the ten forms of Śamskāras prescribed therein. Vācaspati Miśra, the commentator upon the six Darśanas, has, in his commentary on the Pātañjala Darśana, recommended dhyāna of Devatās as prescribed in the Tantras. Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, also, has, in the Śārīraka Bhāṣya, made mention of the Tāntrik Ṣaṭcakra. It is hardly necessary to say that none of these three great men—Śaṅkarācārya, Mādhavācārya, and Vācaspati Miśra,—was a Bengali. Before the compilation of Kṛṣṇānanda's Tantrasāra, there were many compilers of Tantra, such as Rāghavānanda, Rāghavabhatta, Virūpākṣa, and Govindabhatta. In his observations upon the Yantra of Nīlasarasvatī, in his Tantrasāra, Kṛṣṇānanda, observes: "Said by even Śrī Śaṅkarācārya." The famous Śakti Śotra,¹ named Ānandalaharī (wave of bliss),² is everywhere known to be the work of Śaṅkarācārya, and is, as such, universally recited by devotees before Devatās with feeling and reverence. Compilations of Tantra, such as the Rāmārcana Candrikā,³ the Mantramuktāvalī, the Sārasamgraha, the Bhuvaneśvarīpārijāta, the Sāradātilaka, the Tripurā-sārasamuchchaya, the Svachchhandasangraha, the Sārasamuchchaya, the Mantratantraprakāśa, and the Somabhujangāvalī, were prepared long before the time of Kṛṣṇānanda and Raghunandana. References to these books are to be found in the works of Kṛṣṇānanda and Raghunandana. In the well-known astronomical work called Dīpika, days for taking Dikṣā (initiation) have been determined separately from those for commencement of education and investiture with the sacred thread (upanayana). That Dikṣā must, therefore, be Tāntrik Dikṣā, distinct from

¹ Hymn to Śakti.

² See Arthur and Ellen Avalon's "*Hymns to the Goddess*" for this and other Hymns to the Devī.

³ Passages compiled in the Rāmārcana Chandrikā have been quoted by Vācaspati Miśra in the chapter on Vāsantī Pūjā in his Kṛitvacintāmaṇi

Vaidik Dikṣā or Upanayana. Compilations come into existence long after the preparation of original works and when capacity for their production has ceased. It is when ordinary folk find difficulty in establishing a concordance between the ordinances contained in numerous original and other works—that the learned undertake the making of compilations for the determination of the right forms of religious practice, the regulation of objections against the Śāstra, the establishment of a concordance between apparently conflicting authorities and the settlement of all disputed matters. A period of at least a thousand years must, in this author's opinion, be considered to have elapsed between the date of original works and that of compilations. Many of the compilers whose names have been mentioned lived a thousand years ago. There is therefore no ground, in the Pandit's opinion, for doubting that the Tantra Śāstra is at least two thousand years old. In the eleventh skanda of the Śrīmadbhāgavata it is said that Keśava (Viṣṇu) should be worshipped in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra;¹ and, again, that men desirous of acquiring jñāna (spiritual knowledge) should worship Bhagavān according to Vaidik and Tāntrik ordinances.² The same book in the same skanda also says: "Hear how people should worship Me in the Kali age according to various Tantras.³ They should observe my Yātrās (Dolayātrā, Rathayātrā, etc.), perform sacrifices, be initiated in the Vaidik and Tāntrik modes, and undertake to perform the vrata in which I am worshipped."

In the Brahma Purāṇa it is said that people should enter into the temple of Bhuvaneśvara in the Garden of a single mango Tree,⁴ and there worship Mahādeva according to Vaidik and Tāntrik rites. This passage has been quoted by Raghunandana in his Puruṣottamatattva. The Kūrma Purāṇa says: "There are found in the world many Śāstras antagonistic to Śruti and Smṛti. The ordinances of such Śāstras are tāmāsik.⁵ Karāla, Bhairava, Yāmala, and similar other books follow Vāmamārga,"⁶ and so on. This passage, which is also contained in the Kūrma Purāṇa, has been quoted by Raghunandana and other compilers. The Pandit points out that Karāla, Bhairava, and Yāmala are Tāntrik works, and that the Vāmamārga is a mode of Tāntrik worship. In the Rāmāyana there are references to Balā and Atibalā,⁷ which are Tāntrik,

¹ Chapter iii, śloka 47 and 48. See Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.

² Chapter v, śloka 28. Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.

³ Chapter v, śloka 31. Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.

⁴ The town of Bhuvaneśvara.

⁵ That is, the outcome of a state in which the tamoguṇa predominates.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Bālakānda, canto xxii, śloka 12, 13, and 15. These are Vidyās taught

and the mode of acquiring which is given in the Tantrasāra. Rāghava Bhatta and Raghunandana quote Nārada as to the nature of the Tāntrik mode of worship for persons in impure conditions. In the Parāśara Bhāṣya there is a quotation said to have been originally made by Govindabhāṭṭa, which says that mantras with Om should not be taught to Śūdras, and so on. In Bhojarāja's Vyavahārasamuchchaya there is reference to a passage stating that Upanayana and Dikṣā should not be performed whilst Brihaspati¹ is in Rāhu.² The Varāha says that learned men should worship Janārdana either according to the Vedas or according to the Tantras. The Padma Purāṇa, in its Uttarakhānda, asks how it is possible that one may become bhāgavata³ without taking dikṣā in the Vaiṣṇavī cult? In the third chapter of the Nārada Pancarātra it is said that whilst meditating on the six Cakras named Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Manipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, Ājñā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seen in the thousand-petalled lotus, resplendent, of the colour of a freshly-formed cloud, wearing yellow silk, two-armed, beautiful, pure, and smiling, in the company of his own Śakti, Kundalinī. Again, in the fourth chapter of the same book, the author uses the terminology of the Tantra Śāstra when he says, "Lakṣmirmāyā Kāmabijam," etc.,⁴ and thus introduces the great mantra of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, consisting of bijas, and formed of eight syllables. All are aware that the piercing of the six Cakras, their names, and the Devī Kundalinī are matters of the Tantra Śāstra. There are references to Tāntrik prāṇāyāmā in the Pātāñjala Darśana and in the Bhagavadgītā, and other places of the Mahābhārata.⁵ It should also be pointed out here that there is indirect, though not direct, reference to the Tantra Śāstra in Yudhiṣṭhira's question to Bhīṣma contained in the 7th, 8th, and 9th ślokas of the 259th chapter in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata, dealing with Mokṣadharma. These ślokas may be translated as follows:

"I have heard that Vaidik ordinances are gradually coming into disuse, in the progress of ages. There is one form of dharma for the Satya age, another for the Tretā age, another for the Dvāpara age, and another again for the Kali age. The Vedas contemplate different forms of dharma according to different capacities of men. The words of the Vedas are true, and from these words, again have emanated all-embracing Vedas," and so forth. Now, here it may be asked, what are these all-embracing Vedas which have emanated from the Vedas? In the Mahāmahopādhyāya's opinion no other reply is possible but that the Tantras are here referred to. Smṛtis also, like the Vedas, do not give to all castes equal adhikāra (right) to them, and prohibit their study to Śūdras.

¹ The planet Jupiter.

³ Devoted to Bhagavān.

² The ascending node.

⁴ Lakṣmī, Māyā and Kāma Bijas.

The "all embracing Vedas," therefore, cannot mean Smṛtis. The Tantras give adhikāra to people belonging to all castes, so that they alone are "all embracing". Moreover, there is no instance of the word Veda being used in the sense of Smṛti. There is, however, ample use of the terms Āgama and Nigama in the sense of the Tantras—terms which originally meant the Vedas. Just as, according to the Śāstra, the Vedas have no author, but are merely remembered by fourheaded Brahmā, so the Tantras also have not, according to the Śāstra, any author, but have merely emanated from the mouths of Śiva. Neither the Vedas nor the Tantras have emanated from the mouths of munis, ṛṣis, or the spiritually wise (jñānī). Brahmā is Īśvara and Śiva also is Īśvara, and the Śāstra says that the Vedas emanate from the mouths of the former, and the Tantras have issued from those of the latter. More explicit are the ślokas 121, 122, 123, and 124 of chapter ccxxciv in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata dealing with Mokṣadharma. Here Mahādeva says to Dakṣa: "Extracting from the Vedas complete with their six angas (limbs), and from the Sāmkhya-Yoga, I promulgated the Pāśupata vrata with such austere and extensive tapas as no Deva, or Dānava could perform. This vrata is superior to all practices ordained in the Vedas and other Śāstras, all-good, beneficial to all castes and āśramas,¹ everlasting, performed in three years and ten days,² secret, highly spoken of by wise men, spoken ill of by fools; opposed (viparītam) in some matters to Varṇāśramadharma,³ though in many others similar thereto; prescribed by learned men; practised by men who have risen superior to Āśramas,⁴ and beneficial. Dakṣa, you will obtain all the fruits of such Pāśupata vrata," and so forth. To what Śāstra, the Pandit asks, other than the Tantra Śāstra, can this Pāśupata vrata belong? It cannot be the Vedas, for the vrata is said to have been extracted from them. Again, the reader will, he thinks, be astonished to know that the Mahābhārata has adopted the Tāntrik terminology and Tāntrik methods in the introduction of mantras. In the 74th śloka of chapter ccxxciv of the Śānti Parva referred to above, the following mantra occurs:

¹ It is open to all, which the Veda is not.

² Quaere. The text I have before me runs: Abdair daśārdha sangyuktam, which according to Nilakantha, means that it may be acquired in years or shortly by the merit of those who practise the five yamas and five niyamas. Some read "daśāha" (ten days) for "daśārdha." There seems to be no reason for limiting the period of the vrata thus.

³ Thus there is no caste in the cakra; the smārtha vratas, such as fasting, are not generally observed; pūja in Vāmācāra is done at night and other matters.

“Ghantī charu chelī milī brahma kāyikamagnīnām.”¹

Nilakantha explains this mantra as follows:

“Ghantī = Om. The word ‘Rudra’ must be introduced. Agnīnām kāyikam = the wife of Fire, or Svāhā; Brahma = Om. Thus the following mantra, containing eighteen syllables, has been here quoted: Om Rudra chelī chelī chelī chelī milī milī Om Svāhā.”² In the 379th śloka of chapter xiv of the Anuśāsana Parva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Yudhiṣṭhira: “Eight days passed as though they were but a moment, and I took mantra from that Brāhmaṇa (Upamanyu).” After this verse it is narrated how Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed austere tapasyā in the worship of Śiva by repeating this mantra; how Śiva, being pleased, appeared before him in the company of Umā: how the hymn sung by Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleased Śiva and Umā, so that they granted him blessings and so forth. One is therefore astonished to hear some educated persons say that nowhere in the Mahābhārata is there any mention of Śakti save in the Virāṭa Parva, where Yudhiṣṭhira hymns Durgā. In the story of Dakṣa’s yajña, related in the Mahābhārata, there is no mention of the death of Dakṣa’s daughter,³ but it is said that Bhadrakālī rose out of Her body for the destruction of the yajña,⁴ and that pleased by the hymn sung by Dakṣa, Durgā appeared with Mahādeva before him, and then disappeared. Amongst the thousand names spoken of by Kṛṣṇa in the Anuśāsana Parva there appear “Vāmadeva, and Vāma, and Prāk, and Dakṣiṇa, and Vāmana,” and “author of the Vedas and author of Mantras.”

¹ The full verse is—

“Ghanto’ghanto ghati ghantī charu chelī milī milī
Brahma kāyikamagnīnāṅg dandimundastridandadhrik.”

The meaning of which is as follows: Ghantah = prakāśavān, or shining—that is, Pūrṇabrahmasvarūpah. Aghantah = Māyāvritatvena prachchhanna-prakāśa—viz., that whose shining is concealed on account of its being covered with mayā or jīva. Gathī = he who ghatayati (joins) men with the fruit of their karma, or who attaches fruit to the karma of men. Ghantī = ghantavān, or possessor of ghantah (q. v.). Charu = those who move (charanti)—that is, jīvas, movable and immovable men, animals, trees, etc. Chelī = player; as men play with birds, so Śiva plays with us. Milī = one who has mila (attachment). Śiva as the cause is attached to, or, as we should say, in, all effects. The word is mentioned twice for emphasis. Brahma = Praṇava. Kāyikamagnīnām = the spouse of Fire, or Svāhā. Dandimunda = ascetics, paramahamsas, etc. Tridandadhrik = holding the three staffs of bael, palāśa and bamboo, as is done in Upanayana. These staffs are thrown into the Ganges on the twelfth day following Upanayana. Śiva is thus Pūrṇabrahman; Jīva; the Giver of the fruit of Karma; the all-brilliant One; all-moving Jīvas: He who plays with Jīva; who as all Causes is in all effects; Praṇava; and Svāhā; the ascetic and Gr̥hastha life.

² This is according to the Gauras who say that Ghantī = Om; and insert Rudra in the vocative case, and repeat chelī four times.

Mantras here cannot be said to refer to Vaidik mantras owing to the distinction made between the author of the Vedas and the author of mantras, and Nilakanṭha, the commentator, in fact, explains mantras as Tāntrik mantras. By Vāma and Dakṣiṇa are meant (the Pandit thinks) the vāma and the dakṣiṇa ācāras in Tantra. Tāntrik Bija mantras are known to many. In the Anuśāsana Parva also, where mokṣadharma is treated of, it is said: "Four-mouthed Mahāliṅga and Cāruliṅga etc., ruler of bījas," author of bījas, and so forth. There are even more explicit references to the Tantra Śāstra in the Mahābhārata. For instance, it is said, "O Rājaṛṣi:¹ the Sāṅkhya Yoga, the Pancarātra, the Vedas, and the Pāsupata, know these Śāstras, the purpose of which is to establish jñāna," and, again: "Śrīkanṭha Śiva, husband of Umā and lord of all things, promulgated the Pāsupata Jñānaśāstra when in placid mood. Bhagavān Himself is the Knower of the entire Pancarātra."² Sanskrit scholars in India, according to the Pandit, believe the Pancarātra to be a Tantra. Again, the injunction that in the Kali age people should worship Īśvara in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra leads many people to think that the Tantras are recent because they are intended for the Kali age. The Pandit replies that the Mahābhārata itself answers this view in the Śānti Parva, where it is said that in the Satya age Rudra, engrossed in Yoga, told the Tantra Śāstra to Bālakhilya³ Ṛṣis; but that subsequently it again disappeared through the māyā of that Deva.⁴ In the 17th śloka of Chapter cclxvii⁵ of the Śānti Parva, Maṇḍarī Kapila questions Syūmarāśmi as follows: "Tell me if you have seen any Śāstra other than Āgama." In reply Syūmarāśmi speaks of many things, and at the end of each statement he remarks: "This is Śruti." The Pandit then asks what is meant by the word Āgama in Maṇḍarī Kapila's question. In his Commentary on the Śārīraka Sūtra, "owing to the impossibility of generation," Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya refers to the fourfold division of Vāsudeva, Sankarṣana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha⁶ as stated in the Pancarātra, and whilst he does not attempt to disprove it, he does disprove the theory of the generation of Sankarṣana from Vāsudeva

¹ Ṛṣi and King.

² Śānti Parva, chap. ccc. lxi, śloka 64 to 68.

³ Small Ṛṣi the size of a thumb (angūṣṭha), 60,000 in number. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa says they are children of the wife of Kratu and Ūrdharetas. It is believed that they still appear, and bathe on Pauṣa Śaṅkrānti Day at Gaṅgāsāgara.

⁴ Śānti Parva, chap. ccc. xl. viii, see śloka 17 and 18. The reference should be to chap. 349.

⁵ This should be chap. cclxviii.

⁶ Vāsudeva = Paramātmā; Śaṅkarṣana = Jīva; Pradyumna = Manas;

advanced by the followers of the Pancarātra. Again, in his Commentary on the Sūtra: "The Lord cannot be merely the instrumental cause on account of the existence of diversity in creation," he writes: "Māheśvaras, too, admit it," "All this was taught by Paśupati, who is Īśvara, for undoing the bonds of paśus," etc. In his Śrībhāṣya on the first Sūtra quoted above, Rāmānuja Svāmī writes, "Elucidated by Nārāyaṇa Himself in the Pancarātra Tantra," and, again, "Non-Vedic practices are opposed, and not the cults of Yoga and Paśupati; for Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pancarātra, the Vedas and Pāśupata, are self-evident, and cannot be disproved by reasoning," and so forth. Rāmānuja Svāmī quotes as evidence all the passages of the Mahābhārata above mentioned, as well as many other passages from the same epic, and other works. There is a scripture named Sūtasamhitā, of which the Brahmagītā is a portion. Its speaker is Brahmā, and throughout it deals with Śaṅkara. Its annotator is Mādhavācārya himself, the writer on all Darśanas, and commentator of the Vedas. At the end of every Chapter he writes: "By Mādhavācārya, an inhabitant of Kāśī, a devotee of the Śakti of action, a server of the lotus-feet of the three-eyed Deva and illuminator of the path of Upaniṣad." Here Mādhavācārya calls himself a devotee of the Śakti of work (Kriyāśakti), but the Tantra alone deals with Śakti of will, Śakti of knowledge, and Śakti of action. Not only in the Mahābhārata, but in all Purāṇas the greatness of the Devī, as extolled in the Tantras, has been described either shortly or with elaboration. In the account of the greatness of Rudra contained in the Varāha Purāṇa it is said: "Śaṅkara has as many aspects as there are Mahāśaktis. He who worships Her ever worships Him as husband." Again: "If he who worships the Devīs pleases Rudra also, these Devīs become for ever siddha to that Mantrin. There is no doubt of this."¹ What is there in the Tantras, it is asked, more than what this verse says? In the Śaṅkara-Samhitā, which forms a part of the Skanda Purāṇa, the Ṛṣis ask Sūta, "Bhagavān, we desire to hear of the system of Viramaheśvara," and so forth. And Kārtikeya says to Mahādeva: "There are few who know Śaiva-Āgama." Śaṅkara, in His reply, says: "The essence of the Vedas, the Āgama, and the Purāṇas charms the mind and should be kept secret."² According to the Mahāmahopādhyāya, Śaiva-Āgama undoubtedly means the Tantra-śāstra,³ as does the word Āgama in the expression "the Vedas, the Āgama, and the Purāṇas," because it is mentioned separately from the Vedas. There are many Upaniṣads other than the ten on which Śaṅkarācārya wrote his Commentary. He selected these ten

¹ Varāha Purāṇa, chap. xxci.

² Chapter xxc.

because they supported his monistic theories. Just as there was no necessity to write a Commentary on the Vedas, so it was not necessary that he should write commentaries on the Upaniṣads which dealt with the methods of worship (upāsana). The Akṣamālikā Upaniṣad enumerates the substances which should be used for the rosary with which japa¹ is done. They are coral, pearl, crystal, conch, silver, gold, sandalwood, putrajīvikā, lotus-seed, and rudrākṣa. The Tantra Śāstra mentions exactly the same substances. There are many Upaniṣads of the Atharva Veda, such as Atharvaśikhā, Atharvaśirah, Advayatāraka, Adhyātma, Annapūrṇa, Amṛtanāda, Amṛtabindu, Avyakta, Kṛṣṇa, Kaula, Kṣurikā, Gaṇapati, Kātyāyana, Kālāgnirudra, Kuṇḍikā, Tripurā-tāpanīya, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Devīdvaya, Dhyānabindu, Nādaḥ, Nārāyaṇa, Nirvāṇa, Nṛsiṃha-tāpanīya, Pāśupata, Brahma-paṅgala, Paippalāda, Vahvricha, Vṛñajjāvāla, Bhasma, Muktikā, Rahasya, Rāma-tāpani, Vajra-pañjara, Varāha, Vāsudeva, Sarasvatī-rahasya, Sītā, Sudarśana, Hayagrīva, etc.² As there are 21 recensions of the Ṛgveda, 109 of the Yajurveda, and 1,000 of the Sāmaveda, so there are the same number of Upaniṣads belonging to each of the Vedas respectively. The Sanskrit-knowing reader will have surmised from the name of the Upaniṣads above enumerated that each of them deals with forms of worship similar to that prescribed by the Tantra. There are many commentaries on the Nṛsiṃhatāpanīya Upaniṣad, one of which is written by Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya and another by his great guru Gauḍapādācārya, known by the name of Munīndra. There is, therefore, no ground, it is contended, for the supposition that this Upaniṣad may be a spurious one. Kulluka Bhaṭṭa, the author of the most authoritative commentary on the Manu Smṛitī, has, in his note on the first śloka of Chapter ii of the book quoted a passage from Hārta's work which says: "Now we shall explain dharma. Dharma is based on the authority of Śruti. Śruti is of two kinds—Vaidik and Tāntrik." From this it is evident that the Tantra Śāstra is nothing else than a part of the Vedas, and is, consequently, known by the names of Āgama and Nigama. The passages above quoted from the Mahābhārata prove that Mahādeva first promulgated the Vedas, and then the Pāśupata dharma from a part of it. Thus, from the statement also made by Mahādeva Himself, we learn that the Tantra Śāstra is a part of the Vedas.

According to the Pandit, the Tantra Śāstra is referred to by the word "rahasya" (mystery), used over and above the expression "All the Vedas," in the 165th śloka of chapter ii of the Manu Smṛitī, and also

¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, p. 155, in the *Śaṅkarācārya*.

by the word "vidyā," which is used in addition to the Vedas and the Upaniṣads in the 10th sūkta of the 4th Brāhmaṇa in the 2nd varga of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The Vṛddhahārītasamhitā contains a full account of the Tāntrik form of initiation (dikṣā). The Uṣanahsamhitā makes clear references to the Pancarātra and the Pāsupata dharma. The Kātyāyana Samhitā ordains worship of Gaṇeśa, Gaurī and other Devas and Devīs. The Vyāsa Samhitā recommends japa of the guhyavidyā,¹ use of rosaries, with beads of crystal and the like, and worship of Rudra with Gāyatrī. Nowhere else but in the Tantra Śāstra is there a Gāyatrī for Rudra or any other Devatā. The Śaṅkha Samhitā says that after dhyāna of a Devatā, japa should be made with a rosary of crystals or other beads, the number of recitations being recorded by the fingers of the left hand. In the Vṛddhagautamasamhitā there is a list of the names of the authors of Dharma Śāstras. In this list there occur the names of Brahmā, as also those of Umā and Maheśvara. It is unnecessary, in the Pandit's opinion, to further quote passages or to cite more authorities. Like the Purāṇas, all Smṛti, and Samhitās contain references, direct as well as indirect, to the Tantra Śāstra, but the Tantra Śāstra makes no reference to either Smṛti or Purāṇa. This also proves the great antiquity of Tantra Śāstra. There is a Tāntrik scripture named Śivāgama containing Sūtras which have been quoted as authorities by Kṛṣṇānanda in his Tantrasāra. Its commentator is Abhinavagupta, the Court pandit of Gonardda, King of Kashmir. Gonardda died the death of a hero in the great war of Kurukṣetra.²

We need not here follow the Pandit in his speculations as to Buddhistic influences in Ancient America as established by Mexican architecture, or as to the similarity of the ritual of Ancient Egypt³ to that of the Tantra, beyond stating that in his opinion such speculation supports the more direct inferences derivable from the study of Indian history and literature as to the antiquity of the Tantra Śāstra, which his essay is written to prove. The learned Mahāmahopādhyāya concludes with the expression of a doubt whether the reasons and arguments he adduces will appeal to "the great men, free of all prejudice, learned in Western language and science, with intellects brightened, sharpened, and coloured by Western philosophy," and apologizes for himself, with perhaps some latent sarcasm, as follows: "I had not the good fortune of learning deductive and

¹ Secret Mantra.

² See the Rājataranginī of Kashmir, and the Commentary on Śivāgama, of which there is a copy in the Library of the Mahārāja of Darbhānga.

³ He points out with regard to Horus, one of the Egyptian Devatās, that Ahemti (Lord of the Dead) and Ahemti (Ruler of the Dead) are identical.

inductive logic. In the *Chatuspāthi* of a native *Brāhmaṇa* Pandit, I learnt to argue 'whether sound follows the fall of a palm-fruit or precedes it,' though he says it must not be supposed that other great logicians were mainly engaged in discussions of the "palm-fruit-falling" nature.

Western writers and Indians influenced by their works and general outlook are much occupied with this question of the antiquity and date of the Tantra. To the orthodox all Śāstra is eternal. Moreover, to the Indian temperament, as one of them has well said, sugar is prized for its sweetness without regard to the land whence it came or the cultivator by whom it was grown. It can hardly be said that we have the necessary materials for final judgment from the purely historical standpoint. If it be alleged that Indians have sometimes gone to opposite extremes, European critics and their Indian followers have, as a general rule, displayed almost a mania for belittling the antiquity of Indian religions, literature, and art. In coming to any conclusion on this matter, it is necessary first to inquire into the different elements of doctrine and practice, to distinguish what is original from what is alleged to be an accretion, or interpolation, and to consider the allegation of non-Āryan influences and so forth. It is necessary also to distinguish between Tāntrik doctrine and practice so ascertained from its expression or record in any particular document. The latter may be of yesterday, and yet its subjects may be of the ages. Some would derive the Tantra from Mahāyāna Buddhism. Others contend that the Mahāyāna school appears to have adopted the doctrines of the Indian Tantra, which is in notable respects opposed to the original doctrines of the Buddha. The influence of his teachings are rather, it is said, to be found amongst the Vaiṣṇavas, who have in their number many cryptic Buddhists, than in forms of worship which, not to mention other salient differences, prescribe the sacrifice of animals with elaborate rituals before the images of Devas and Devīs. In fact, the *Lalitavistāra*¹ already cited represents Śākyasingha as condemning the "fools" who make obeisance to numerous Devatās and who perform tapasyā in the cremation grounds and at the crossing of four roads, as also the practice of "sinful men and heretics (pāṣandas)" who use wine and flesh, he having prescribed the ascetic life and the avoidance of injury (whether by sacrifice or otherwise) to all beings. Professor Masaharu Anezaki,² after citing the *Rājataranginī* as evidence of Tāntrik worship at the time of Aśoka (240 B.C.)³, says that without a doubt the Tantra began to develop even before Nāgārjuna (A.D. 200), and

¹ Chap. xvii, using that work, not historically, but as an indication of a Buddhist view of a Śāstra which some would derive from Buddhism.

² "History of the Religions in Ancient India."

³ I cite the author's views without myself expressing an opinion on the

that in observing Buddhism it has been successful despite all efforts to the contrary. In fact, as regards Buddhism, the Tantra, according to this view, stands for a Hindu conquest. How far, as some allege, the conquering doctrine has been itself subjected to non-Āryan influences is another question. Some contend that here, as in most things, there is some truth in both contentions, and that Indian and Buddhist thought are likely to have influenced one another. Such may think that the influence of the latter has predominated as regards certain Tāntrik schools and rituals. It is thus noteworthy that the Tārā Tantra, which is said by some to belong to the northern tradition, states that Buddha and Vasiṣṭha were Tāntrika munis and Kula Bhairavas.¹ According to the Rudrayāmala, the worship of Tārā was introduced from Mahācīna in the Himālayas by Vasiṣṭha, who worshipped the Devī Buddhīśvarī, according to one of the Śākhās of the Atharvaveda. The solution may possibly be found in a more perfect knowledge of the various traditions, which are said by some to have existed, than we now possess.

Whatever be the date of the first appearance of specifically Tāntrik doctrines, which owing to the progressive nature of its developments, may never be ascertained, it will be probably found, upon a profounder inquiry into the subject than has been hitherto made, that the antiquity of the Tantra has been much under-estimated. This, however, does not mean that all the current Tantras, or all their contents, are of great antiquity. The contrary is, I believe, the fact. The Meru Tantra,² in a curious śloka, says: "There will be born at London English folk whose mantra³ for worship is in the Phiranga⁴ language, who will be undefeated in battle and Lords of the world."⁵ Whatever be the age of this Tantra, it may be argued that this passage at least was probably not written earlier than the eighteenth century.

Comparatively modern Tantras may, however, be based on older versions now lost.⁶ On the orthodox hypothesis, moreover, there is no

¹ See A. K. Maitra's Introduction to this Tantra published by the Varendra Anusandhana Samiti.

² Twenty-third Prakāśa.

³ That is, unlike some defiled (mlechcha) countries, it is not without a religion of its own.

⁴ Here English. The term, which is ordinarily derived from "Frank," is applicable to the European peoples generally. Its meaning, however, according to the Śabdakalpādruma, is, "those addicted to sin and anger". It is also used, as a qualificative of disease, to denote syphilis, because of the prevalence of the disease in Europe.

⁶ Phirangabhāṣayā mantrāsteṣāṅsangśādhanaḍbhuvī
Adipāmaṇḍalānāṇcha saṅgrāmeṣvaparājitaḥ
Ingrejānavaṣatpañcha landrajāśchāpi bhāvinah.

reason why new Śāstras should not even now appear in the world. The work of Śiva has not come to an end with the inception of the Kaliyuga. In this, as in other matters, Indian tradition, when rightly understood, may perhaps be found to largely justify itself. The following remarks of Professor Hayman Wilson have a bearing on this point, both on the general question of the antiquity of the Hindu Śāstras and that of the Tantra, if, as is commonly done, the date of the latter is to be fixed with reference to the alleged date of the Paurāṇik period, which, according to general European views, precedes them: "It is therefore as idle as it is irrational to dispute the antiquity or authenticity of the greater portion of the contents of the Purāṇas in the face of abundant positive and circumstantial evidence of the prevalence of the doctrines which they teach, the currency of the legends which they narrate, and the integrity of the institutions which they describe at least three centuries before the Christian Era. But the origin and development of these doctrines, traditions, and institutions were not the work of a day, and the testimony which establishes their existence three centuries before Christianity carries it back to a much more remote antiquity—to an antiquity that is probably not surpassed by any of the prevailing fictions, institutions, or beliefs of the ancient world."¹

The Tantras are generally cast in the form of dialogues between Śiva and his Śakti Pārvatī, the form in which Satī, his Spouse, reappeared after her death at Dakṣa's sacrifice, or in their forms as Bhairava and Bhairavī. Śiva is called Ādinātha, the first Guru. But he is also Śakti, for he and the Devī are one.² The Devī is therefore included with him in the circle of Gurus. Śadāśiva, as the Mahāsvachanda Tantra states, promulgates as both guru and śiṣya (disciple), the Tantras in the form of question and answer, by the division of his real and manifested forms (prakāśa and vimarśa). Where the questioning is by the Devī as śiṣya and the answers are given by Śiva as guru, the Tantra is in the form called Āgama. Where the Devī is the teacher, as in the Nigamakalpadrūma and other Nigamas,³ the Śāstra is known as a Nigama. Both terms are derived from the *italicized* letters of the Sanskrit verses which occur in the Āgamadvaitanirṇaya,⁴ and which run: "An

¹ Viṣṇu Purāṇa, xcix.

² Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verses 14-16. Mamarūpāsīdevitvam nabhedo'ste tvayāmama; for in their ultimate ground both Puruṣa and Śakti are one.

³ It is noteworthy that the Nigamas appear to deal largely with the Rahasyapūjā.

⁴ Āgatang Śāmbhuvaktrebyah
gatancha girijā mukhe
matancho vāsudevena

Nirgato girijā vaktrāt
gatascha giriśāstrim
mataścha vāsudevasva

Mahāsiddhasāra Tantra agrees with this as to Viṣṇukrāntā and Rathakrāntā, but makes the Āśvakraṇtā extend from the Karatoya River ¹ (in the Dinajpur District) to Java. The following Tantras are assigned ² to the several regions, though there are differences of opinion as regards particular Tantras. Thus, in the first list some would exclude the Tantrāntara and include the Yogārṇava. Some Tantras appear in more than one of these lists.

The Tantras of the Viṣṇukrāntā are said to be:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Siddhiśvara | 23. Kulaprakāśaka | 44. Sanatkumāra |
| 2. Kālitantra | 24. Devīkalpa | 45. Yoni |
| 3. Kulārṇava | 25. Gandharva | 46. Tantrāntara |
| 4. Jñānārṇava | 26. Kriyāsāra | 47. Navaratneśvara |
| 5. Nilatantra | 27. Nibandha | 48. Kulachūḍāmaṇi |
| 6. Phetkārī | 28. Svatantra | 49. Bhāvachūḍāmaṇi |
| 7. Devyāgama | 29. Sammohana | 50. Devaprakāśa |
| 8. Uttara | 30. Tantra-rāja | 51. Kāmākhyā |
| 9. Śrīkrama | 31. Lalitā | 52. Kāmadhenu |
| 10. Siddhiyāmala | 32. Rādhā | 53. Kumārī |
| 11. Matsyasūkta | 33. Mālinī | 54. Bhūta-dāmara |
| 12. Siddhasāra | 34. Rudrayāmala | 55. Yāmala |
| 13. Siddhisārasvata | 35. Bṛhat-Śrīkrama | 56. Brahmayāmala |
| 14. Vārāhī | 36. Gavākṣa | 57. Viśvasāra |
| 15. Yoginī | 37. Sukumudinī | 58. Mahākāla |
| 16. Gaṇeśavimarśinī | 38. Viśuddheśvara | 59. Kuloddīṣa |
| 17. Nityā-tantra | 39. Mālinī-vijaya | 60. Kulāmṛta |
| 18. Śivāgama | 40. Samayācāra | 61. Kubjikā, |
| 19. Chāmūṇḍā | 41. Bhairavī | 62. Tantracintāmaṇi |
| 20. Muṇḍamālā | 42. Yoginī-hṛdaya | 63. Kālivilāsa |
| 21. Haṃsa-Maheśvara | 43. Bhairava | 64. Māyātantra |
| 22. Niruttara | | |

The following are given as Rathakrāntā Tantras:

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|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Chinmaya | 7. Mahānīla | 13. Vāsudeva-rahasya |
| 2. Matsya-sūkta | 8. Mahā-nirvāṇa | 14. Bṛhadgautamīya |
| 3. Mahiṣāmarḍinī | 9. Bhūta-dāmara | 15. Varṇoddhṛti |
| 4. Mātṛkodaya | 10. Deva-dāmara | 16. Chhāyānīla |
| 5. Haṃsa-Maheśvara | 11. Bijacintāmaṇi | 17. Brihadyoni |
| 6. Meru-tantra | 12. Ekajatā | 18. Brahmajñāna |

¹ A very sacred river which is notable in this—that it never loses its sanctity. All others do so in the month of Śrāvaṇ (July-August).

² See Sādhana-kalpalatikā, by Nilmani Mukhopādhyāya, part ii, pp. 22-26; and Introduction to Vol. I of my "Tāntrik Texts." As to other Tāntrik

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 19. Gāruḍa | 34. Yakṣiṇītantra | 50. Sammohinī |
| 20. Varṇa-vilāsa | 35. Svarodaya | 51. Ācārasāra |
| 21. Bālā-vilāsa | 36. Jñāna-bhairava | 52. Cīnācāra |
| 22. Puraścaraṇa-
candrikā | 37. Ākāśa-bhairava | 53. Śadāmnāya |
| 23. Puraścaraṇa-
rasollāsa | 38. Rājarājeśvarī | 54. Karālabhairava |
| 24. Pañcadaśī | 39. Revatī | 55. Śoḍha |
| 25. Pichchhilā | 40. Sārāsa | 56. Mahālakṣmī |
| 26. Prapañcasāra | 41. Indra-jāla | 57. Kaivalya |
| 27. Paramēśvara | 42. Krikalāsa-dīpika | 58. Kulasadhbhāva |
| 28. Navaratneśvara | 43. Kangkālāmālinī | 59. Siddhi-taddhari |
| 29. Nārādīya | 44. Kālottama | 60. Kṛtisāra |
| 30. Nāgārjuna | 45. Yakṣadāmara | 61. Kālabhairava |
| 31. Yogasāra | 46. Sarasvatī | 62. Uddāmareśvara |
| 32. Dakṣiṇāmūrti | 47. Śāradā | 63. Mahā-kāla |
| 33. Yoga-svarodaya | 48. Śaktisāngama | 64. Bhūtabhairava |
| | 49. Śaktikāgamasar-
vasva | |

The Tantras of Aśvakraṇtā are given as follows:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Bhūta-Śuddhi | 23. Śivāchchana | 44. Kāmaratna |
| 2. Guptadikṣā | 24. Samvara | 45. Gopalilāmṛta |
| 3. Bṛhatsāra | 25. Śūlinī | 46. Brahmāṇḍa |
| 4. Tattvasāra | 26. Mahāmālinī | 47. Cīna |
| 5. Varṇasāra | 27. Mokṣa | 48. Mahāniruttara |
| 6. Kṛyāsāra | 28. Bṛhanmālinī | 49. Bhuteśvara |
| 7. Gupta-tantra | 29. Mahā-mokṣa | 50. Gāyatrī |
| 8. Gupta-sāra | 30. Bṛhan-mokṣa | 51. Viśuddheśvara |
| 9. Bṛhat-toḍala | 31. Gopī-tantra | 52. Yogārṇava |
| 10. Bṛhannirvāṇa | 32. Bhūtalipi | 53. Bherandā |
| 11. Bṛhatkaṅkālinī | 33. Kāmini | 54. Mantracintāmaṇi |
| 12. Siddha-tantra | 34. Mohinī | 55. Yantrachūdāmaṇi |
| 13. Kāla-tantra | 35. Mohana | 56. Vidyullatā |
| 14. Śiva-tantra | 36. Samīrana | 57. Bhuvaneśvarī |
| 15. Sārātsāra | 37. Kāmakeśara | 58. Lilavatī |
| 16. Gaurī-tantra | 38. Mahāvīra | 59. Bṛhachchīna |
| 17. Yoga-tantra | 39. Cūḍāmaṇi | 60. Kurañja |
| 18. Dharmaka-tantra | 40. Gurvarchchana | 61. Jayarādhāmādhava |
| 19. Tattvacintāmaṇi | 41. Gopya | 62. Ujjāsaka |
| 20. Vindu-tantra | 42. Tīkṣṇa | 63. Dhūmāvātī |
| 21. Mahā-yoginī | 43. Mangalā | 64. Śiva |
| 22. Bṛhad-yoginī | | |

Particular Tantras have been from time to time printed, such

sex. The Śāstra affords to all, with freedom from Vaidik exclusiveness, the practical method (more extensive than mere ritual in its ordinary English sense) which qualifies the Sādhaka for the reception of the higher doctrine of the path of knowledge (jñāna mārga). The Śūdra and woman are not, as in the case of Vaidikācāra, under any ban. As the Gautamiya Tantra says¹ people of all castes, and whether men or women, may receive its mantras “Sarvavarṇādhikārāścha nārīnām योग्यमेवा ca.” In the Cakra there is no caste at all, even the lowest Caṇḍāla² being deemed, whilst therein, higher than Brāhmaṇas. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says:³ “That low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Candāla or a Yavana⁴ into the Kaula dharma, considering them to be inferior, or a woman, out of disrespect for her, goes the downward way. All two-footed beings in this world, from the vipra⁵ to the inferior castes, are competent for kulācāra.”

In the next place, as regards the subject matter in respect of which liberty is so given, it is necessary to understand the distinction which Hindus draw in religious matters between knowledge (jñāna) in the sense of actual experience, as distinguished from mere mental theorizing, and action (kriyā). The answer, then, is that the Tantra is above all a practical scripture primarily concerned with action and ritual, which the undiscerning may think has, in any case, been prescribed to an excessive extreme. It is so concerned because, though action cannot alone and directly secure liberating knowledge, the attainment of the latter must necessarily be preceded by right action. For how otherwise can such spiritual knowledge be gained? In order to secure the development of the Jīva's body, certain physical exercises are necessary. Similarly both these and other mental and spiritual exercises are required if liberating knowledge (brahmajñāna) is to be attained. Such exercises are generically termed “Sādhana,” and include both worship (pūjā) and all its ritual.

Sādhana has historically varied with race and creed. The Hindu has his own in the Tantra which is called the Sādhana Śāstra. The provision of such a definite training is the strength to a greater or less degree of all ancient orthodoxies, just as its absence may prove to be the rock on which the more modern forms of religion may split. Doubtless to the newer “Protestant” spirit, whether issuing from Europe, Arabia, or elsewhere, all ritual is liable to be regarded as “mummery,” except possibly

¹ Chap. i.

² One of the lowest and most unclean castes.

³ Chap. xiv, verses 137, 184.

⁴ Here generally used for non-Hindu, a term specially applied to the Greeks or Bactrians. There is nothing, therefore, to prevent a non-Hindu from being initiated in Kaula dharma, provided that he be fit for such initiation.

the particular and perhaps jejune variety which it calls its own. For even the most desiccated "Protestantism" has not been able altogether to dispense with it. There is room for this spirit as for others, or it would not be there. Like, however, everything else, it may go beyond the purposes which are claimed to justify its origin.

Etymologists have derived the word "ceremony" from "cor" and "monere". The derivation, though inaccurate, explains well the purpose of the thing itself. The sacred rites which are the expressions of innermost feeling proclaim the religious truths which have inspired them and excite devotion, rendering man more sensible of the Divine Presence. So, as the Council of Trent declared, "the Catholic Church, rich with the experience of ages and clothed with their splendour, has introduced mystic benediction (mantra), incense (dupa), water (ācamana, pādya, etc.), lights (dīpa), bells (ghaṇṭā), flowers (puṣpa),¹ vestments, and all the magnificence of its ceremonies in order to excite the spirit of religion to the contemplation of the profound mysteries which they reveal. As are its faithful, the Church is composed of both body (deha) and soul (ātmā). It therefore renders to the Lord (Īśvara) a double worship, exterior (bāhyapūjā) and interior (mānasapūjā), the latter being the prayer (vandanā) of the faithful, the breviary of its priest, and the voice of Him ever interceding in our favour, and the former the outward motions of the liturgy." The human need for ceremonial in the sense of the necessity which man feels of an exterior manifestation which shall both stimulate and translate his inner feelings, is such that no religion of the past has been without its rites and ceremonies, and even the shallowest of epochs, whilst affecting a superiority to them, have yet preserved these ceremonies in its civil life.

The necessity which is thus admitted exists with greater urgency in the spiritual sphere. It is idle to suppose that all or any may, through Vedāntik talk or by the mere closing of the eyes in pious pose, realize the Nirguṇa Brahman. The great teaching of the Vedānta by itself and without accompanying Sādhana can achieve nothing of real worth. Its study may produce a Pandit. But to the Sādhaka the disputations of Pandits, whether philosophical or scientific, is like "the cawing of crows". There is both reason and humour in the Hindu saying that a logician will be reborn a jackass. It is Sādhana which alone in any system, whether Hindu or otherwise, is really fruitful. The Tantra claims to be practical and to be a pratyakṣa Śāstra in that it affords the direct proof of *experience*. It is therefore one of its common sayings that, "Whereas other Śāstras are concerned with speculation only, the art of medicine and Tantra are practical, self-evident and prove themselves at every step."

The Tantra further claims not only to be practical and to contain provisions available for all without distinction of caste or sex, but also to be fundamentally rational. Nowhere else, in fact, than in the Hindu Śāstras do we find greater stress laid on the necessity of thought and reasoning. For in India it is said want of reasoning involves loss of dharma. "There is no sage who has not an opinion of his own."¹ The virtue of its general method is not merely thaumaturgic,² but is inherent in the mental states induced by dhyāna and other physical and mental processes, and the excitation of the exterior rituals; an inherence chiefly explained by the fact that as at base all existence is of the nature of mind, the transformation of mind is the transformation of existence itself. Thus the sacramental energy of the mantra, even when the Guru (who is himself the manifestation on the terrestrial plane of Ādinātha Mahākāla)³ has vivified it with consciousness (caitanya), depends in part for its efficacy on the competence (adhikāra) of him who receives it.

Profoundly based on truth, however, as all ritual is, the Tantra yet recognizes that there is a stage in spiritual progress in which it becomes not merely unnecessary, but an obstacle to further advance. If Sādhana be, as it is, but a means to an end (brahmajñāna, or the realization in personal experience of the Brahman), with the attainment of such end, and to the extent that approach is made to it, it becomes superfluous. As the Mahānirvāṇa says: "To him who has faith in the root, of what use are the branches and leaves?" This stage is, however, both a high and infrequent one, which the great majority (notwithstanding the fancies of some of the "emancipated" in this matter) have by no means reached. As the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says, Brahmasādhana is the highest state of mind; dhyānabhāva is the middling state, and japa comes next. External worship is the lowest of all. Yoga is the process whereby union of the Ātmā and Paramātmā is achieved. Pūjā (worship) is the union of worshipper and worshipped. But for him who realizes that all things are Brahman, there is neither yoga nor pūjā. For him there is neither sin nor virtue, heaven, or future birth. There is none to meditate on nor one to meditate.⁴

In the opening chapter of the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said that "There are fools who, pleased with the mere name of the Karmakāṇḍa, deceive themselves with a multitude of rites. It is not by eating one meal a day that knowledge of the transcendent is attained." "If the ant-hill be struck, is the serpent thereby killed?" "If the mere rubbing of the body with mud and ashes gains liberation, then the village dogs who roll

¹ Nāsau muniryasya matam na bhinnam, as the Mahābhārata says.

² See as to this De la Vallée Poussin, *op. cit.*

³ Yoginī Tantra.

therein have attained it." Ritual is necessary, but it must be accompanied both by sincerity and increasing knowledge, which leads to tattvajñāna, the sole cause of liberation. It is not to be had by talk and self-conceit. Those who read the Scriptures and know not the truth, but pass their time in disputation, are like "the ladle which, lying in syrup, knows not the taste of it." Mere talk leads to nothing. "One may discuss as to what is knowledge and what is knowable, for a thousand years." "Life is short. Many are the Vedas, many are the Śāstras, infinite are the obstacles; therefore it is necessary that the essences be mastered, as the gander sips from the water the milk which has been mixed with it." Ritual schemes exist to meet the requirements of all grades of competency; and their accomplishment with sincerity and intelligence effects their purpose. But of the perfected (siddha) Tāntrika Kaula, who has passed through all preliminary ācāras, it is said: "The wise man who through study of the Scriptures has realized the Truth discards them all as he who gathers paddy throws away the husk and straw." Jñāna derived from the Āgamas leads to the Śabdabrahman. That which issues from viveka (discrimination) is the Parabrahman. There is no realization (tattvajñāna) with attachment to Vaidik and Āgamic rites, however much these may be necessary as the preliminary means to its attainment.

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If the injunctions of the Śāstra are to be rendered intelligible, certain general principles must first be understood. This is the necessary preliminary to the presentation of the ritual facts. For in these principles lie their ultimate significance. The author, in his preface, very truly says: "I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it."

For those to whom the Indian way of thinking, expression, imagery, allusions, and metaphor are unfamiliar, it is not always easy to follow at a first reading the author's discursive argument. A summary of that argument in a Western and more ordered form would therefore be useful. The conclusion of our enquiry, however, appears to be the fitting time for such a summary, even were there space available for it in this volume. The author's preface indicates the main lines on which he proceeds, which I here shortly state and amplify.

The previous portion of this Introduction states the circumstances under which Indian Śāstra was at one time neglected where it was not misunderstood or condemned. Scepticism, unbelief, and then (according to orthodox views) heresy, passing under the name of "reform," had prevailed. The author, in the beginning of his Preface, rejoices to note a revival of true religion, but as an adherent of Tantra is grieved to observe that this Śāstra had not, when he wrote, received its due share of attention. This

and of all Mantras and Yantras. Brahma-knowledge cannot be attained without self-purification, and for this the Tantra provides the only means in the Kaliyuga.

Doubtless there are (he writes) to be found nowadays some superior Vedāntic persons¹ who are wont at all times to say that the portion of the Śāstras which relates to worship and ritual practice (Karmakāṇḍa) is only for those who are devoid of knowledge. This is so; but the implication that they have escaped this class has often but little foundation. They are doers of action (Karma), and as much affected by it as are others. The knowledge of which the Śāstra speaks is not the metaphysical faculty (with its acquisitions) of the mind on the ordinary plane of jāgrat consciousness but is that spiritual experience the existence of which constitutes the fourth stage of turiya consciousness attained by successful yoga. Notwithstanding—and, in fact, because of—their philosophical disquisitions, such persons still belong to the dualistic world, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. We cannot blow it away with our breath, and why should we trouble to do so if it is alleged to be a mere nothing. It would seem as if modern Monism had, through dread of the dualistic world shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in an unhappily existing universe.² Monism (advaitavāda) is doubtless true; but so also, necessarily, is the world of duality for that state of consciousness whence, indeed, it comes. In its own way, this world is as real as the Brahman whose līlā³ it is. What else is the world play of the Brahman but that show of duality which surrounds us?

Worship, by its definition, involves the dualistic idea, and is itself necessary for every dualist, since it is, whether in its ordinary sense, or in that in which it is conceived as all action dedicated to and informed by spiritual purpose and intention,⁴ the true and only expression of the Ātmā to Itself on this plane. It is an essential verity that the Self alone knows the Self. But how may complete self-recognition be attained except the preliminary stages of Sādhana and worship have been passed? If the elect attain success along the path of knowledge (jñāna mārga), it is because, through action and devotion in this and previous births, they have become competent for that path. What the persons to whom the author refers really mean is that such Karma as consists in worship and so forth must be abandoned, but that which is required for the service of wife and children may be retained by the possessors of Brahma-knowledge. It is, however, only those who have truly acquired siddhi who are thereby

¹ See *post*.

² See *post*.

³ “Play”. When understood, a very profound Indian concept, proceeding on the ground that no other reason can be assigned for the world appearance than that which is inherent in the nature of the Brahman itself. See *post*.

released from the obligation of observing these rules of the Karmakāṇḍa, which help to produce it.¹ The Tantra does not, therefore, at the outset ignore this visible, palpable world. We must acknowledge and rightly tread this earth before the consciousness of the embodied Ātmā can be transformed into that other state of consciousness which reveals—for it is in fact—the unconditioned Ātmā Itself. But haste to know the Beyond should not blind us to that which is its present manifestation, constituting both the spacious field and material for Sādhana. He alone realizes the sweetness of the Divine Play “who has plunged into non-dualistic truth after having churned the dualistic world,” which is Its expression to us.

The Brahman is reached through Its universe-aspect. The world does not intervene, as though it were an obstacle hard to surmount between man and God, and set to frighten us. It is the wealth of the Śakti of Viśveśvarī,² whom it reveals. The Tantra, therefore, takes into its arms, as if they were its two children, both Dualism and Monism, affording by its Sādhana and the spiritual knowledge generated thereby the means whereby their antinomies are resolved. It does not entertain the conceit that metaphysics, and still less science, however useful in their own sphere they may be to the full development of conditioned consciousness, can effect anything beyond it. Being but workings of the jāgrat mind, they can never of themselves transcend the limits of those conditions which constitute it. The ultimate questions which that mind raises never receive an answer which it can verify whilst it remains in its conditioned state. The end of all Sādhana is the establishment of that fourth or higher state of consciousness, the existence of which is itself the answer to a question which is no longer put. The Tantra harmonizes Vedāntik Monism and Dualism. Its purpose is to give liberation to the jīva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the dualistic world. It immerses its sādhakas in the current of divine bliss by changing duality into unity, and then evolving from the latter a dualistic play, thus proclaiming the wonderful glory of the Spouse of Paramaśiva in the love-embrace of Matter (jaḍa) and Spirit (caitanya). Those who have realized this, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions the mere touch of which is to others the cause of their perdition. Though resting and rocking upon the waves of the saṁsāra, they are not of it, but detached, and as it were the petals of some wind-rocked lotus. Śiva has therefore said: “In the

¹ The results of sincere worship are patent. If, however, the cause of this be sought, it will be found to lie in the psychological truth that such a worshiper grows akin to that which he worships—a truth which is expressed in the Indian notion of the blissful abodes, sāmīpya, sālōkya, and others. The Devatā becomes not only the content of, but the consciousness itself, of the Sādhaka.

world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic, knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond Dualism and Non-Dualism."

Sādhana, which is of three kinds—physical, verbal, and mental—must be accomplished by the body, senses, and intellect, according to present conditions of country, time, and person. These, however, are all now bad. India, which has for centuries eaten the bread of servitude to strangers, is to-day filled with persons born of parents of different castes, foreigners, defiled people, and adherents of other religious faiths. Bad and filthy habits and practices, oppression, license, and prostitution prevail. In the impure body, lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy, contend as upon a battle-field. Restless are the senses, and doubting the heart. The circumstances of the times render the carrying out of the Vaidik rites and disciplines impossible. That Āryan life no longer exists in which every event, from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body, was accompanied by Vaidik Mantra. A heavenly body which, through the control of the passions, has become a suitable vehicle for the development of Brahma-knowledge according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays impossible of achievement. Foreseeing this, Śiva revealed the path of Tantra, the Sādhana of which is framed to meet the needs and circumstances of the Kaliyuga, and the varying temperaments and proficiency of those who live in it. If there be any doubt of its efficiency, actual practice will verify the reality of its claims.

It is not necessary that faith should precede Sādhana. This if sincerely performed, will produce faith by the effects it achieves in the mind of the Sādhaka. If the knowledge of the Brahman already exists, there is no use of Sādhana. It is in fact, the very want of such knowledge which renders all prayer and practice necessary. Further, whether one believes in it or not, medicine has the power to cure disease. It does not wait upon the intellectual recognition of that fact. In the same way Siddhi (success), the visible (pratyakṣa) fruit of the Śāstra, is the result of its inherent potency. Who knows what will happen in the next birth? That is the best of all philosophies which bears actual and visible fruit in this world. For reasons which the author explains the provisions of the Śāstra act with speed and efficiency, so that fruit ripens on the Tāntrik tree before even blossoms appear on the Vaidik tree. Owing, however, to the neglect of these practical principles, no useful results were being obtained from the renewal of the religious spirit beyond mere barren, pious velleities.

The spiritual ambitions of some were far too presumptuous. Instead of attending to daily duty and worship, they were giving quite an incompetent attention to such extremely subtle and advanced subjects as Nirvikalpa Samādhi, Videhakaivalya,¹ and the like matters, which are in no

¹ That is, the highest form of ecstasy: liberation from the gross body, etc. The author's remarks are not without application to such Westerners as are

way the concern of the vast bulk of men, who are making good progress, according to their state, if they worship God, and do not hate or cheat their neighbours. Others of greater spiritual competence, through neglect or ignorance of the practical directions of the Tantra, which alone reveals the path, had lost their way. After pointing out that it is idle to suppose that knowledge of the truth can be acquired by simply reading the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha or Gītā in the gloom and under the sway of the Kali age, the author, in an interesting passage, states that he has known many a spiritually disposed man who, under the influence of such a day-dream, "has ended in becoming neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being half man, half lion." "By constant meditation *on a misty nothing* his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment, with the inward lament, 'Alas! I am lost.'" He continues "In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask, 'What means are there left to us?' But their only difficulty is this—they want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tāntrik or Paurāṇik worshippers in secret whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma-knowledge, and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock, or thread, or to paint their body with the sacred marks." "Is it not deplorable," he asks, "that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion, at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles?" Doubts concerning the Tantra, the Sādhana Śāstra, arise from ignorance of its true character. Here is to be found the reason why recourse has not been had to it. Common people had, no doubt, much talked about the Śāstra, and quarrelled over it. Some "illiterate traders, crafty discoverers of magic, and thoughtless and starving interpreters of the Śāstra," had busied themselves with it. "But want of faith in the Śāstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, *and by the exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from Gurus only.*"¹ "It is difficult," he says, "to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded Sādhus have been, and are being, deceived by the *dangerous temptations* held up before them by these people." Want of understanding of the Śāstra, together with actual abuses of its injunctions by some of its adherents, have led to the insults now levelled at it. Discussion and agitation and insult have, he says, to such an extent and with such constancy persecuted and wounded the community of Sādhakas that no one who is a son with a body of flesh and blood and strength can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and Father of the universe

¹ See *post*. One of the causes of this degeneracy is referred to by

slandered and abused in such manner.” “Whose heart,” he writes, “is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the root of Siddhi and Sādhana? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sādhakas. We hope that the sons of the Āryan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras.”¹ From the Tantra alone, must be learnt its principles, the exposition of which he lays as his dakṣiṇā (offering) at the Lotus Feet of Dakṣiṇā (the gracious Devī).

ARTHUR AVALON

¹ The demonic enemies of the Devas and of Dharma. Here also the

TANTRA TATTVA

PART I

the crescent moon, and more beautiful than the rain-clouds, and more playful than the wife of the rain-cloud,¹ rests on the soft, flowery bed of the breast of Mahākālā,² intoxicated with the sweetness of supreme bliss.

3

O my heart, seek the shelter of that blue cloud-like Lady Who saith "Fear not," Whose restless curling hair makes lines of refulgent beauty, Whose graceful form is clothed with space,³ Who charms the great Bhairava⁴ with the soft and sweet delights of Her eyes, playful like two large bees.⁴

4

I bow at the lotus feet of the Supreme Devī;⁵ at those feet which give joy to the heart of Him Who is ever joyful,⁶ whose form is the mantra⁷ in the mahāyantra,⁷ and Whose embodiment⁸ is the Tantra.

5

Mother, in Thy two aspects of Śakti⁹ and Śākta,¹⁰ Thou art the source of both Āgama and Nigama Śāstras.¹¹ What Thou hast said as Pārvatī¹² is Nigama, and what Thou hast said as Śiva is Āgama. Thou alone, in Thy two aspects of Śakti and Śākta, art the nurse and nourisher of both Āgama and Nigama. Thou alone, in Thy two forms as Sādhikā and Sādhaka,¹³ holdeth in Thy bosom the Tantra Śāstra, with its teachings concerning Śivatattva and Śaktitattva.¹⁴ Again, it is Thou Who, in Thy aspects of Śakti and Śākta, art the shelter and guardian of both Nigama

¹ That is, the lightning.

² Śiva.

³ That is who is naked as both Kālī and Śiva are represented to be.

⁴ So the Yogavāsiṣṭha speaks of the eyes of Gaurī "as resembling the clusters of black bees fluttering in the summer sky" (Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa, chap. xviii.)

⁵ "Goddess" or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds.

⁶ Śiva, Her spouse; as are also His worshippers. Tāntrik, Gurus names end with Ānanda (joyful).

⁷ Devī is Sarvayantrātmikā (Lalitā, verses 53 and 56).

⁸ Tattva. And so the Lalitā (verses 53) addresses Devī as Saratantrarūpā.

⁹ Power.

¹⁰ That is Śaktimān, or one who possesses power. He in whom She as Śakti inheres, though in reality both are one.

¹¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

¹² Spouse of Śiva.

¹³ That is, male and female practisers of Sādhana, and worshippers.

¹⁴ That is, the principles relating to the Śiva and Śakti aspects of the one Brahman. The Devī is in the form of Śiva (Śivamūrtih), for, as Śruti says:

and Āgama. Whatever modes of Sādhana¹ have been prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra are hidden in Thy bosom in Thy two aspects of Śiva and Śakti. It was for this I said, O Mother, that it is Thou Who giveth birth to, nourisheth, and guardeth Nigama and Āgama in this world. But to destroy them, that even Thou canst not do. For the Tantra Śāstra all of mantra is but another form of Thyself. Were the Tantra destroyed, Thou also would be destroyed. Though Thou Art the destroyer of the universe, Thy power of destruction avails not against Tantra. So I say, O Mother, that the Nigama and Āgama which are in Thee will never be destroyed ! But destroy for once, O Mother, the Nigama and Āgama which are in me. Make cease my repeated coming in and going out of this world as Śakti, as Śākta, as Prakṛti, as Puruṣa.²

(Or it may be explained in another way).³ O Mother, Thou alone, art Śakti and Śākta (as Prakṛti and Puruṣa), art the creator of the Nigama and Āgama⁴ of Jīva.⁵ It is by Thy law that Jīva,⁶ through the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, takes birth. It is Thou who, in Thy two aspects of Śakti and Śākta (mother and father),⁶ nourisheth and protecteth Jīva. Thou alone, O Mother, in Thy twin aspects of Śakti and Śākta, whereby Thou createth, and sustaineth and guardeth the outgoing and incoming of the world, art the cause of the outgoing, sheltering, incoming, birth, sustenance, and preservation of Jīva.

By Thy Mercy, bring about the dissolution⁷ of my world⁸ in these twin aspects of Thyself as Śakti and Śākta.

O Thou Who art Śakti-Śiva in Thy universal Prakṛti-Puruṣa form,⁹ grant me wisdom so that the beauty of the world-enchancing Mother may fill my eyes, my mind, my heart, and the whole of my world.⁸

Appear, O Mother, in Thy eternal form illumining the ten quarters.

With the collyrium paint¹⁰ of wisdom grant glorious vision to the eyes of Thy son blind since birth.

¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² There is a play on the words Nigama and Āgama, as meaning not only forms of the Tantra but also the coming in and going out, the birth and death and rebirth, of the human Jīva, who is the manifestation on the earthly plane of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

³ That is, the Author says that this Sanskrit "śloka" may bear (and probably was written to bear) another interpretation. ⁴ Birth and death.

⁵ The embodied spirit, which is the supreme Spirit, viewed under the apparently limiting conditions known as "upādhi".

⁶ The mother is always placed first, not "father and mother," as in English.

⁷ Pralaya, or the dissolution of the world, which completes the return movement to its cause.

⁸ That is, the world as it appears to the Author. For to each person the world is his own creation; it is only imagined.

⁹ See as to Prakṛti and Puruṣa *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

Grant to me that wheresoever I may turn them, whether on earth, the waters, or on space, Thy beauteous form may make me forgetful of the appearance of the world.

INVOCATION

Mother! in this world, all, before setting themselves to ought, make invocations of varying kinds.

But what invocation shall I make?

I know of none but that to the feet of the all-good Goddess.

All that I am about to write in the Tantratattva is already known to Those who knoweth the hearts of men.

Yantra,² Mantra,² and Tantra are not distinct from Thee.

But I, though in reality inseparate, wish to remain separate.³

As Thou in thy substance art Brahman,⁴ as Thou existeth in the form of the universe,⁵ so art Thou full of play and dancing.⁶

As Thou art all full of joy, will, consciousness and matter,⁷

So, O Mother, I wish Thee to fill my mind, my eyes, my heart, with love.

Thou, too, art the power whereby it is in me to take Thy name.

It is Thine own song which Thou wilt hear.

In the love of Thyself Thou wilt dance.

What invocation then can I make?

The food which I shall give Thee is already Thine. Of it my portion will be the sacred remnants only.

Thou wilt be intoxicated and forget Thyself in Thine own joy.

In the tranquil and solemn ocean of unity I shall swim, and raise there the waves of duality which are the cry of "Mother, Mother."

¹ Mangalācaraṇa—in Bengali: the preceding invocation being in Sanskrit with Bengali translation and commentary. ² See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ By the will to separate life, which while itself a manifestation of the Devī, is overcome by Her as Mahāvidyā: and because thus only can he enjoy Her.

⁴ Brahmayi. In the Kūrma Purāṇa Śiva says: "The supreme Śakti is in me, and is Brahman Itself. This Māyā is dear to me, by which this world is bewildered." Hence the Devī in the Lalitā is called "Sarvamohinī" (all-bewildering). ⁵ Viśvamayī.

⁶ Nṛtyamayī and Līlāmayī. The world is the movement and play of the Supreme, as the Sūtra says: Lokavattulilā kaivalyam.

⁷ Ānandamayī, Icchāmayī, Chinmayī and Mṛinmayī. The Brahman is Sat (existence), Cit (consciousness), and Ānanda (bliss). Icchā (will) is one of its Śaktis, and, having created the visible world, the Brahman enters into it: Tat śṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviṣat. The Devī is (Lalitā, verse 76) Kṣetrasvarūpa—that is, the field, which is known by the Soul (Kṣetrajñā) or matter. Līlā

f it vexes Thee, drown me with a thrust of Thy foot, but then in so doing
 Thou must first raise Thy foot from the breast of Mahākālā.¹
 May be Thou wilt turn to Him with wrathful eyes, and say: "Kill him."
 But instantly I shall laugh outright and clap my hands, and say:
 "This is Mother's."² O Dark Beauty, whose substance is a mass of
 consciousness!³ O Mother! show me for once the full play of wrath
 upon the splendour of Thy world-bewitching beauty.
 Great is my desire, O Mother! to see the play of merciful flames reddening
 with wrath⁴ in that face of Thine adorned with smiles.⁵
 Unless that desire of mine is fulfilled, Sādhana⁶ becomes full of pain.
 O Thou who dispelleth fear from the heart of Thy Devotees⁷
 O Thou who gladdenest the heart of Bhava⁸
 Thou knowest (the secret of) Thy play.
 Whether Thou makest me afraid or makest me laugh or weep, teach me
 to say "Mother," so that in doing that which is auspicious (Mangalā-
 caraṇa) or inauspicious (Amangalācaraṇa) I may take shelter at the
 feet of Her Who is good (Mangalā),⁹ dancing and shouting:
 Victory to the Mother."
 Victory to Kulendra Kulānanda.¹⁰
 Victory to Guru,¹¹ Kāmadeva Tārkika.
 Victory to Kuladānanda¹² and his disciples.

¹ Śiva. The Devī is represented as standing on Śiva, who is, as it were, a corpse, for he is bhoktā (enjoyer) only, whilst she is karttrī (actress).

² This is a play on the word "ma" (mother) which, as a noun in the possessive case becomes in Bengali "mar," which is also the verbal imperative "kill," meaning "kill".

³ Cidghana, as if Her body were a thickened mass of consciousness.

⁴ The Devī is Krodhākārāṅkuṣojjvalā (Lalitā, verse, 2). This is explained in chap. XVIII of the second part.

⁵ The Devī is (Lalitā, verse 59) cāruhāsa (with beautiful smile); the saying "The moon is thy sweet smile" means that there is a certain state of consciousness (prabodha), which gives the highest bliss, and which should be learnt from the Guru.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Fearlessness, at which the Tāntrik aims, and which is the special gift of the Devī. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa says: "When you are remembered in times of difficulty, you take away all fear of all beings." She is Bhayāpahā (remover of fear). Śruti says (Tai. Up., ii. 9-1): "By knowing the bliss of that brahman, none fear anything."

⁸ The watery form of Śiva in the Aṣṭamūrtih.

⁹ A play on the word "mangalācaraṇa," which also means "invocation"

¹⁰ Celebrated Tāntrika.

¹¹ See the Lalitā (verse 137): "We adore the Devī who assumes the form of the Guru (Secret) in the form of secret knowledge beloved by her secret devotees, residing in the secret place." Hence she is Guhyarūpiṇī.

Victory to the Lord, the Supreme Guru.
 Victory, Victory, Victory to Kṛṣṇānanda.¹
 Victory to the most Supreme Guru.
 Victory to Guru, the object of highest desire.
 Victory, Victory to Bhairava and Bhairavī.²
 Victory, Victory to the accomplished Sādhaka.³
 Victory, Victory to the Sādhikā who grants Siddhi.⁴
 Victory to Yantra, Victory to Tantra.
 Victory, Victory to the Tantra Śāstra.
 Victory, Victory to the revealer of the Tantra;
 Victory, Victory to the Īśvarī⁵ of the Tantra.
 Victory, Victory to Her who fulfils all desires.
 Victory, Victory to Her who is all-good.
 Victory, Victory, Victory, Victory to the name "The all-good Mother
 of the world."⁶

¹ Celebrated Tāntrika.

² Śiva and Śakti and their worshippers are so named.

³ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ Success.

⁵ Feminine of Īśvara—Lord: the Devī the object of Tāntrik worship who is ruler or promulgator of all Tantras, Sarvatantrēṣī and Sarvatantrarūpī (Lalitā, verse 53).

⁶ The Devī is the Holy Mother—Śrīmātā—the first of Her thousand names in the Lalitā Sahaśranāma, where its commentator Bhāskaraśāstriya says: "The mother is usually called upon in times of sorrow, but our natural mothers are not able to remove the three forms of pain (tāpatraya). Great men have said: 'Since I have had many thousands of births, I have had many mothers and many fathers. I know not how many I may have in the future. O Treasure House of compassion, save me who am overpowered with fear, and have no other refuge from the vast ocean of Saṃsāra, full of disaster.' The greatest World Mother is the only one who can remove the endless misery of existence. We should praise Her as the Mother, so that She may be induced to show us the way."

VICTORY TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ ĪŚVARĪ, THE ALL-GOOD DEVĪ

PREFACE

By the grace of the all-good Mother, the drum of Sanātana Dharma¹ seems to be again sending forth sweet and auspicious notes of triumph in Bhāratavarṣa,² the land of Āryas. Just as an intelligent man, who has a good knowledge of music, is naturally impelled, as it were, by some mantra on hearing the deep and soft sound of musical instruments to beat time at every measure; so also a child who has no knowledge of, but who loves and is charmed by, music, feels himself impelled to keep time at every measure by shaking his head, or moving his finger, or clapping his hands, or dancing, or by some other movement. Similarly, every scion of the Āryan race in India, be he intelligent or not, is to-day intoxicated with the sweet music of the charming mantra of the widespread agitation on the subject of the Sanātana Dharma, and is keeping time at every measure and dancing. In this great festival, in this ancient Durgā Festival of India, astrology, philosophy, Smṛti, Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, and many other musical instruments are playing in the extensive courtyard of the universe. But we are grieved to find that the great instrument of the Tantra Śāstra, in which all other instruments are included, on which all other instruments depend, and which is the sole source of all yantras³ and mantras, is to-day silent. We know that the proper place for the playing of this instrument is not a courtyard, but the interior of the temple of Tantra Śāstra, which is full of mantras; as also that the proper place for its discussion is not at a meeting or by society at large, but in the heart of the accomplished Sādhaka. But what can we do? We are players on the outside. So long as we do not hear the solemn sound of sweet mantras from the accomplished mouth of the Sādhaka within the temple as also the triumphant sound of the bell in his hand, so long do we fail to make out what music

¹ In the present connection the phrase may be understood to refer to the eternal religion of the Hindus. As to Dharma, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² India.

³ The imprints of the Śrī Vidyā Yantra, and that of Smaśāna Kālī appear

to play—the music of ablution, the music of āratī,¹ the music of sacrifice or the music of bhoga.² The discordant noise of musical instruments in the mantra-less courtyard outside the seat of worship is the sole cause of all the disorder which now besets the work of preaching dharma, even in spite of so much agitation, discussion, speech-making, and interpretation. These musical instruments observe neither time nor measure. Perhaps at the place of worship the rite of great ablution⁴ has not yet been begun but in the courtyard outside the music of the final oblation in homa is commencing. It is deeply to be regretted that the very community which trembles with fear, like a person suffering from constitutional fever at the very mention of the rules of practice, is to-day constantly busying itself with such extremely subtle and secret matters as nirvikalpa-samādhi, samādhi,⁶ videha kaivalya,⁷ supreme love, and nirvāṇa, liberation. The result is that this untimely and timeless music has come to be of no purpose and impossible of performance.

In fact, the sight of this outward bustle of science and philosophy made by the community devoid of siddhi and sādhanā⁸ reminds us of our village (bārwāri) pūjā.⁹ Just as the condition of the pūjā makes one fearful lest in course of time even the image itself should be dispensed with, so the condition of society to-day makes one afraid lest the talk of siddhi and sādhanā should one day disappear from the Āryan Society. Let us however, console ourselves with the knowledge that, even if it were possible for the sun and moon to cease to move, it is impossible for this pūjā¹⁰ to become a village pūjā. Although it is the property of common people, it is always uncommon; and, although it is always uncommon, every member of the Āryan Society has always a perfect right to it as an independent sādhanā. In this pūjā there is no priest (purohita). Its object is not self-deception, but sādhanā for the self and acquirement of siddhi. In this temple of sādhanā the worshippers are not¹¹ unwilling to repeat the mantra on which we depend, but are doubtful about its efficacy. They are not incapable of repeating the mantra, but are apprehensive lest it be of no effect. There is, therefore, a hope that if this doubt can be dispelled and this apprehension removed

¹ Āratī (waving of light before the image).

² Bali.

³ Offering of food.

⁴ Mahāsānā.

⁵ The sacrifice in fire.

⁶ Highest form of "ecstasy".

⁷ Kaivalya, in which the Jīva becomes free from the trammels of the body.

⁸ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁹ A pūjā carried out by subscription, in which often more attention is paid to the accompanying amusements than the pūjā (worship) itself, which is the justification.

¹⁰ That is, Siddhi and Sādhana.

a day will soon come when the ten quarters of India will resound with the united voice of innumerable Āryas, loudly declaring: "There is no Śāstra superior to Tantra, no guru superior to Tantra, no path superior to Tantra, no method superior to Tantra." Emboldened by this hope, we make this novel entry into the field of work, depending on the community of Sādhakas for support.

It may be said that when doubts have arisen about the Sādhana Śāstra,¹ it is no easy matter to remove them. We, too, do not deny this. But we say that the fact that it is not easy does not make it altogether impossible. It is happy news that doubts have arisen. When thirst has appeared, one need not be anxious about getting water. An unfathomable lake full of water to the brim lies in front. One has only to come down to drink of the water. Having before us the well-arrayed presence of the Tantra Śāstra full of the nectar of eternal truth,² we need not be anxious about dispelling the doubts of the Āryan mind. It is only necessary to advance slowly in the path of truth. It is a matter for regret that, although thirst has appeared and the lake lies in front, it has yet become necessary to advertise the fact and to preach in order to induce people to drink the water. Advertisement is, however, in fact, required, not so much in order to induce people to drink the water, but that the path may be cleared.

There is now much discussion, dispute, and quarrel among common people over the Tantra Śāstra, and the path which leads to the inner truth has become very difficult, very tortuous, full of doubts and thorns. These thorns and doubts are not ascribable to any fault in lake itself, but are due to want of traffic thereto.

Formerly, in the glorious days of happiness and good fortune of Bhāratavarṣa, Āryan sādhakas were wont to enjoy, even in their homes, the blessing of drinking the nectar of truth² granted to them by their gurus. It was not then necessary that they should bathe in a place of pilgrimage³ for the purpose.

Under the remorseless pressure of the wheel of destiny such days are now past for Bhāratavarṣa. One by one the crest-gems of the race of sādhakas have found rest at the lotus-feet of liberation⁴ of Her who is all-merciful. For want of competent gurus the community of disciples is lamenting in deep darkness. We know not when again will the Īśvarī⁵ of the world illumine the hearts of devotees with the brilliant light of Her merciful glances; when again the blind children of the world, who

¹ The Tantra which, being a practical Śāstra, is essentially concerned with Sādhana, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² Tattva.

³ Tīrtha.

⁴ Kaivalya.

now live at a distance from their mother, will open their eyes of consciousness, and, immersed in the effulgence of the beauty of Her whose substance is consciousness, get up on the lap of Ānandamayī,¹ crying with an overpowering joy "Mother, Mother"; nor when again shall we hear the words, "The tie of the heart is broken; all doubts are dispelled and all karmas² are destroyed for him who has seen Him is higher than the highest."

It is true that the path of Tantra has become full of thorns, but if, on hearing this terrible news, we sit down for ever to ponder on it with fearful hearts, the thorns will never be removed. If you wish to follow a path, you must take your stand on it. The thorns do not belong to the path, but have come to it from outside. Do not be afraid. The dry and worthless thorns will be broken and ground to dust under the heroic tramp of the feet of sādhakas.³ Fearing lest you should not believe in our words, we shall, with our eyes fixed on the feet of sādhakas, be to them their shoes.⁴ We care not if we be cut, torn, wounded, and lacerated all over. We have a strong desire to reach the path of truth, holding the feet of sādhakas to our heart, and to sink for once in the vast lake of the nectar of Tantra. We hope that the community of accomplished sādhus⁵ and sādhakas will not fail to fulfil this desire on our part.

During the progress of the nineteenth century many Tantras have been printed and translated. Of these, the compilation made by Mahātmā Rāmatoṣaṇa Bhattācārya under the title of "Prāṇatoṣiṇī," and published by Prāṇa Kṛṣṇa Biswās Mahodaya, is a work which really gladdens the heart of the world of sādhakas. Next the Āryan Society has been greatly benefited by the publication, by Rasika Mohana Chattopādhyāya Mahāśaya, of the Tantrasāra with a translation, and of many other Tantras. A faint idea of many a Tāntrik principle has thus been reflected in the mirror of the hearts of sādhakas. But, unfortunately, these indistinct impressions have themselves become a source of terror arising from deep doubts. A study of the Śāstra has served rather to make the intricate bonds of the heart stronger than to break them. Still, it seems to have been a source of great good; for, from the doubts it has raised, there has to-day appeared in society a spirit of inquiry into śāstric (scriptural) truths. With the exception of the Prāṇatoṣiṇī and the Tantrasāra, all works which have been published on the subject of Tantra are but thorns on the path of truth.

¹ The ever-Blissful Mother.

² Effects of action.

³ Those who practise Sādhana: devotees.

⁴ As the shoe comes between the road and the feet and protects them, so the Author will come between Sādhakas and the thorns to protect them.

Three classes of vipers are riding together over the Tantra Śāstra—namely, a number of short-sighted and illiterate traders, a few crafty discoverers of practices of magic,¹ and some thoughtless and starving spiritual interpreters of the Śāstra. Through them society is to-day going down to perdition. It is difficult to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded sādhus have been, and are being, deceived by the dangerous temptations held up before them by these people. Want of faith in the Śāstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, and by the exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from gurus only. This want of faith cannot be eradicated by anything but the weapon of Śāstra. One must stand at the door of Śāstra in order to dispel doubts about it. From the Tantra alone must be learnt what the Tantra has said about the principles of Tantra².

Secondly, as regards worship,³ many people think that faith must precede practice. But we do not think this possible, particularly in the case of those most hidden and obscure mysteries about Tāntrik worship to which we find reference made. The intellect is powerless to understand why the Śāstra has enjoined their performance. Nothing but disgust, hatred, disrespect and irreverence can find place in the conclusion at which man's erring intellect then arrives. Not to speak of matters which are unknown to common people, even amongst such things as are of common knowledge, and thus well known to them, concerning Śaṭcakra⁴ alone there are innumerable interpretations, ideas, and experiences.⁵ Most of those who, in the rush of the daily novel religious waves of the twentieth century, lose their footing and know not what to do, nowadays take the name of Kula-Kuṇḍalinī,⁶ in order to establish themselves on firm ground.

Besides this, there is a class of yogīs⁷ devoted to the Upaniṣads and enlightened by the Yogavāsiṣṭha, who often say that there is really a lake of clear water within the body, and that lotuses blooming in them form the Śaṭcakra! In sorrow the Sādhaka and poet Rāmaprasāda has said:

“O mind, what search do you make for Her? Madman! She must be contemplated with feeling in a dark room. Can she be caught without such feeling?”

But, with a loud voice intoxicated with the drink of the honey of lotuses he has sung:

“In the bed of lotuses Kālī, in the form of a female swan (hamsī), plays amorously with the male swan (hamsa).”

¹ Indrajāla.

² Tantra-tattva.

³ Upāsana.

⁴ The centres in the body.

⁵ Pratyakṣa siddhi.

⁶ The Devī whose seat is in the Mūlādhāra Cakra.

It has become difficult to bear in silence all the insult to which we see the Śāstra subjected nowadays. Moreover, there is a class of pure sāttviks¹ who every now and then say that Kālī is "butcher Kālī",² that Tantra means "licensed grog-shop";³ that Śiva wrote the Tantra Śāstra under the influence of the fumes of gānjā,⁴ and so forth.

We have no time to pay any heed to the words of these Non-Āryas. Goats begin to cry as soon as the drum sounds the music of the Durgā pūjā festival, but that does not do away with Pūjā.⁵ Good deeds, of which the Dakṣayajña⁶ is an example, will be taken care of by Vīrabhadra⁷ himself. We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things, but how is Kālī or Śiva or Tantra to blame? The pity of it all is that those who abuse the Tantra in this way are themselves initiated in Tāntrik mantra. But what can we do? It is the nature of unchaste women to live on the means of their husbands, and at the same time to sing the praises of their paramours. We are not sorry to see the downfall of those whose nature is such. What we are sorry for is that the discussions and agitations carried on by these wicked people, and their example, constantly persecute and wound the community of sādhakas to such an extent that it is almost on the point of being destroyed. Who that is a son with a body of flesh and blood and possessed of strength, can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and the Father of the universe slandered and abused in such a manner? Whose heart is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the roots of siddhi and sādhana? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sādhakas. We hope that the sons of the Āryan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras.⁸

Thirdly, we often find that of such members of the Āryan Society as have been recently initiated, or are willing to be initiated, many are aimlessly moving about along various paths. Of some, perhaps, the gurus are dead; some have taken initiation from women gurus; some are sorry for the incompetence of their Gurus; some are disciples of sannyāsis, who have gone away to distant places where it is difficult to go to them; some have only sons of gurus, who, too, are of immature age, ill educated,

¹ Persons in whom the sattva guṇa predominates, "good people," here used ironically.

² Because animal sacrifice is made to this Devatā.

³ Abkārī: the reference being to the use of wine in the ritual of the Tāntrik Vāmācārins, and the abuse of that ritual in disobedience to Śāstric injunctions. Intemperance, as the Śyāmarahasya says, leads to Hell.

⁴ Hemp (*Cannabis indica*).

⁵ At which they are sacrificed.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ The Great Bhairava produced by Śiva to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice.

or uninitiated. In the case of some, the families of gurus have died out; and some, again, who have seen the different views of different munis¹ in the works of Tantra Śāstra printed with translations and commentaries, are, as it were, counting one by one the waves of a vast sea. Every one says: "Do this," "Don't do this." But if I ask why I should do this, he becomes dumb. I do not disbelieve the words of the Śāstra, nor do I say that it will be useless to follow them. I only want to know what it is that I do. Unfortunately, there is no means of my knowing it. Such a destructive thunder has fallen on the high head of the present high society that not only people are ignorant that the mūlamantra² of the Iṣṭadevatā,³ the Devatā of one's worship, has a meaning, but many are even averse to believing that it may have one. It might not have mattered whether I know the meaning or not, had not the Śāstra itself, on the authority of which we base our practices, or the little of them we follow, said that it was useless and improper to follow a practice without knowing and understanding it.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: "O Spouse of Śambhu! fruitless are the worship and all the acts of those who do not know the true nature of Devatā, the principle⁴ underlying yantras,⁵ and the śakti⁶ of mantras."

I cannot disbelieve the great saying of the Śāstra, for how can I ignore the prohibitions of the Śāstra whose commands I have to obey? Next I see it proved in my own case that it will be useless to follow a practice without knowing and understanding it. How can I disbelieve that of which I myself am a witness? I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it. The prohibition, therefore, must be acted upon, and in order to do so the thing must be known and understood. I have, however, already stated what the condition is of those from whom I am to know and understand it. Owing to these circumstances, it has become necessary to find out a means by which people will be prevented from giving up practice through want of understanding, trampling, through want of knowledge, on the Syamantaka gem which adorns His head, and thinking that daily worship and the like are so much waste of labour. It is necessary that I should have firm faith in the doctrine, that the truth which I have come by is unerring whether or not I can act according to it, and that the path which I have taken is the broad royal road to the seat of the Queen of Queens⁷ of the universe. It is after a due consideration of the opportunities which the elements of time, place, and person may at present offer for finding out a means of effecting

¹ Sages (satirically).

² The principal Mantra of a Deva.

⁴ Tattva

³ Deity of the worshipper.

⁵ Worshipped diagrams.

She is the Queen without a second of the kingdom of the universe, and Śāstra¹ is the name of her universe-controlling and unfailing will. You and I have not the capacity to understand the principles which govern the profound statecraft of the kingdom of eternal worlds which belong to the Empress of the universe. You and I are in this more insignificant than the most insignificant, illiterate, and ignorant people. Our sole capacity is to obey Her commands. They alone understand the world-play² of Brahmayā,³ who, by the mercy of Mahāvidyā and the grace of Brahmayā,⁴ have been able to make their way through the mass of dualistic⁵ darkness thick with illusion,⁶ and to reach the ultimate truth of monistic doctrine.⁷ You and I have come to this world with the duty cast upon us of advancing only along that path which is marked by their footprints. As the courtiers of a royal court are not the authors, but merely the interpreters, of statecraft, so the truth-seeing Ṛṣis⁸ are not the originators of the Sādhana Śāstra,⁹ but its remembrancers merely.¹⁰ It is not a Śāstra marred by mistakes, errors, and deception. Bhagavān, the creator of all creatures and knower of all hearts, is its revealer. He in whom mistakes are mistaken, in whom error is erroneous, and in whom deception is itself deceived. Bhagavatī,¹¹ the supporter of the world is its hearer. Nārada and other Ṛṣis learnt the truth¹² from Brahmā¹³ and other Devas.¹⁴ Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, and other Gurus¹⁵ learnt in their turn from the latter. It is these alone who are the courtiers of the royal court of the Empire of the Universe. You and I, the subjects of this Empire of the Universe, are merely the servants of that statecraft in the form

¹ Scripture.

² The world is the play of the Brahman. As the Sūtra says, Lokavattulilā Kaivalyam.

³ The Devī who is one with Brahman.

⁴ The Devī as destroyer of ignorance and illusion (Avidyā), which veils the Reality. Both Māyā and Vidyā reside in the Lord as His Śaktis, like shade and light of the sun, and are the respective causes of bondage and liberation.

⁵ Dvaita is that which sets the world and the embodied spirit (Jīva), apart from the supreme spirit (Parabrahman), as opposed to Advaita which proclaims their unity.

⁶ Avidyā.

⁷ Advaita.

⁸ Inspired seers, by whom the Śāstra were "seen"—that is, to whom it was revealed.

⁹ Sādhana is the means employed to attain an end; in this case the ultimate aim of Being. The Tantra is pre-eminently a practical Sādhana Śāstra.

¹⁰ The Author of Śāstra is the Brahman (God). The Ṛṣis merely heard and handed it down.

¹¹ Feminine of Bhagavān—the Devī.

¹² That is, the Śāstra.

¹³ The creative Deva of the "Trinity" (Trimūrti), who must be distinguished from the Supreme Brahman in the neuter voice.

of Śāstra which has been promulgated by them. They have had the privilege of being near the person of the King, and have thus had an opportunity of observing with their own eyes the principles which, even in the smallest matters, govern His actions. They have, with bowed heads, admitted the unerring truths of Śāstra. To look, then, askance at these truths, to attempt airily, without reaching the greatness or acquiring the knowledge of the Ṛsis to set them aside is just as if one were to try to blow away the Himālayas—an act which is ridiculous enough to make the intelligent laugh, the mad man dance, and which is likely to bring a violent death to the foolish Non-Ārya.¹

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCRIPTURE

I hear you say: "Take me there; I will examine with my own eyes whether the thing be true or not." But the answer is that it becomes him alone to say this who has eyes to see and feet to walk, and simply desires a knowledge of the path. As for me, I have neither eyes nor feet nor knowledge of the path, but only a demoniac, indomitable egotism, which prevents me from seeing what I have, and what I have not. Still, I know not how kind She is. Lame as I am, the Mother² has carried me through the journey of eighty-four lakhs of births,³ fraught with the greatest of difficulties, and has placed me in an Āryan gotra⁴ in Āryavarta, in the land of Bhārata,⁵ where freedom has its fullest play. But how hard is the wheel of ill fortune! The moment I fall from the lap of the Mother,⁶ that very instant my head is made restless with the waves of freedom. Now, I would rather sink in that sea of freedom which I love so much, and would rather die than believe that I am dying without ocular proof of it.

You may say, "My path leads to death, but, unless I die, how can I know that that path of mine is bad and that yours is good? This is all that I can say about acquaintance with the path." Even he who is prepared to serve egotism with such deadly resolve, the ever-merciful Ṛsis call with a sweet tone softened with love, and say: "You are not asked to believe as a favour. Practise, and you will see for yourself that Medicine, Astrology, and Tantra produce visible results at every step."⁷

¹ The Hindus are properly called Ārya, and their country Āryavarta.

² The Devī who is called Ambikā and Śrīmātā.

³ The previous births, as inorganic things, aqueous animals, creeping animals, birds, beasts, and man, through which the soul evolves. Cf. Empedocles *apud* Diog. Laert., viii. 77. ⁴ Lineage. ⁵ India.

⁶ Literally, "the skirt of the dress" of the mother, to which little children cling.

⁷ A common saying establishing the pratyakṣa and experimental character of the Śāstra, which is primarily concerned not so much with speculation as

Lame though I am, I thus reach the place I sought by the blessing of the Most High; and by the grace of Śāstra, unbelieving even as I am, the path is made known to me. But still my wants are not supplied. Without eyes, how can I see? How can I look for the path? Instantly the Śāstra says: "Jīva,¹ even though you are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, seek shelter at the feet of the Guru.² He with sticks smeared with the brilliant paint³ of wisdom will open your celestial eyes." The Śāstra says: "By whom the eye is opened."³ But I hear: "By whom the eye is rooted out."⁴

How may one avert this misfortune? What shall I do with this egotism which makes me feel ashamed to say to the Guru: "I do not understand." It was for this I said that there is no peace until this indomitable egotism ceases. It is useless to take a Guru if you have yourself understood. But if you have not, why should you be ashamed to admit it? Perhaps you will say: "Explain first, and then I shall believe." Why all this useless importunity? If you think that you can show that the Śāstras are mistaken by dint of your own intelligence, and that you will destroy it with the sharpened arrows of reasoning, argument, and judgment, then you must have made good progress indeed! This Śāstra is neither philosophy nor science. It is the Sādhana⁵ which leads to Siddhi.⁶ It must be practised as well as understood. By practice, even though without understanding, it will be made plain. But no amount of understanding without practice will effect this. A Mahāmahopādhyāya paṇḍit⁷ who has conquered the whole world with his learning is, if devoid of practice, not the equal of the meanest of insects in the domain of Sādhana. On the other hand, should a great fool prove himself to be a faithful devotee attached to Sādhana, he is considered by Śāstra to be one in a thousand. It has been said: "Perhaps but one man in a thousand strives for Siddhi, and amongst a thousand of those who strive, maybe only one may be found who knows me truly." It is not the hero of intellect, who is not also the hero of austere practices,⁸ who wins the battle of Sādhana. Just as all the efforts of a great charioteer who has with him an army complete in all its four component parts⁹ are useless

¹ The embodied spirit, here the human being.

² Spiritual director.

³ Collyrium, applied with stick to the eyes, which is believed to clear the vision.

⁴ A play on the words "unmilitam" and "unmūlitam."

⁵ Art and practice.

⁶ Siddhi means success generally. It includes the eight lesser great powers, such as dominion over the elements, and the great Siddhi or liberation (Mukti).

⁷ A title of honour given to learned paṇḍits.

⁸ Tapas.

⁹ Tapas.

if he be himself unarmed, so all the learning of a pandit of mighty intellect is but a vain thing if he be not equally possessed of the power which arises from Sādhana. Whoever with the resolve, "I will accomplish my object or die in the effort," has jumped into a fire, to him, a crest-jem amongst devotees, the Śāstra gives shelter in its secure arms. If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kāmadeva Tārka, hero most powerful in the field of austerity, or of Ganeśa Upādhyāya, whose life was one long surrender to the mother; or of Rāmaprasāda,¹ who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Śakti,² should we in that case have had to sing in Tantra Tattva³ the song of all these evil designs (against the Śāstra)? But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sādhana-Śāstra, has been shaken.

DOUBTS CONCERNING THIS SCRIPTURE

It is said: "We have the Vedas the Śāstra of prayer. Why, then, has the Tantra Śāstra again been put forward?" This is the first point of doubt in the present-day society of men vain of their education. What appears to them as a matter of still greater doubt and the mere raving of a madman is the assertion that by means of the Tantra Śāstra such Siddhi may be gained in one life, in one year—nay, in one week—as can only be otherwise with uncertainty attained after the practice of age-long austerities. Why, they say, should Bhagavān⁴ be so merciful to the Kali age⁵ with all its most heinous sins, as to make it possible to attain in one life or in one week that which was rarely attained even by Devas like Indra.⁶ If such be possible, then Īśvara,⁷ they say, must be highly partial. At such talk it is difficult to restrain a smile.

¹ The celebrated Bengali poet and Śākta.

² Śakti is Devī—that is, both the power of God and God Itself. Each of the Devas has His Śakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

³ This book.

⁴ God; that is, He who is possessed of the six forms of aiśvarya which pertain to Īśvara—viz., Śrī (auspiciousness), Virya (power), Jñāna (wisdom), Vairāgya (dispassion), Kīrti (glory), and Māhātmya (greatness).

⁵ The fourth or last of the four ages in which the orthodox consider the world now to be, and which is marked by sin and weakness. The first, or Satya Yuga, was the golden age; in Tretā Yuga virtue declined by one-quarter; in Dvāpara Yuga by one-half; and in Kali Yuga by three-quarters.

⁶ Deva of the firmament, King of the celestials.

⁷ The "personal God," Creator and Ruler of the world, the Brahman with qualities; thought of with Prakṛti; associated with, but not Himself subject to, Māyā (Māyāvichchinnam caityanyam ca Parameśvara) (Vedānta Paribhāṣā, 9). The supreme individuality is the quality of Īśvara. In the Viśvaśarīra chapter of the Virūpākṣapañcāśika it is explained as "Lordship, activity,

You and I might just as well be inspectors of the kingly work of Īśvara, whose reputation for administration would in that case depend on your or my criticism. On the other hand, I ask, if He is partial, what do you or I lose by that? If He who is the highest, all-powerful, omnipresent, and the knower of all hearts becomes partial, how can you or I prevent that? You may say we shall blame Him. But what does it matter to Him whether you and I blame Him? He who knows the hearts of the meanest insect, does He not know that you and I will blame Him? In spite of His knowing it, He has taken on Himself the blame, and, solemnly declaring, "True, true, again true—true there is no doubt," has said: "It is true and beyond all doubt true that in the Kali age there is no liberation for him who forsakes the path laid down in the Āgama,¹ and attempts to pursue another. In the Kali age the fool who seeks to attain Siddhi by the paths shown in other Śāstras is like a thirsty man who digs a well on the very banks of the Jāhnavī.² For the attainment of happiness in this world or the next there is no path which leads to both enjoyment and salvation³ so excellent as that shown in the Tantra."⁴

What will you gain by threatening with your blame Him from whose own mouth has come this unerring conclusion? He who is afraid of blame or pleased by praise may be your Īśvara, but he is not the God of the world. He who is God (Īśvara) of the world is the Lord (Īśvara). His divinity and lordship over the universe stands supreme, spurning both glory or disgrace, praise or blame. This is the wealth of his Vaikuṇṭha.⁵ If you please, you may blame, you may chastise, you may deal hard blows with your fist at the foot of the Himālaya Mountains, yet the immovable Lord of mountains will not be shaken, though your fingers will be torn and broken. Those who, in endeavouring to discuss the truth as to the divine (Īśvara Tattva), have realized the effect of doing so may desist. But those who judge God by their own ideas of justice will not be satisfied with that. We ourselves do not deny the apparent partiality alleged, but we say that His strict adherence to justice has not been broken by the mercy shown to the creatures of the Kali age. On the contrary, not to have treated them with such kindness would have been unjust. We ask what sort of justice

¹ Here the Tantra.

² The River Ganges.

³ The peculiar claim of the Tantras is that it gives both worldly enjoyment and salvation. It is Bhuktimuktikarāṇica. In Yoga there is no enjoyment (Bhoga), and in enjoyment no Yoga (union with the Supreme). But the Tāntrik has both (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verses 50, 51; Muṇḍamālā Tantra, chap. ii). Bhoga, or enjoyment, is of five kinds—pleasure arising from sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. This enjoyment may be had on earth or in the transitory heavens of enjoyment, which are to be distinguished from mukti, or liberation, the state which alone endures.

was it on the part of God to give to them of the Satya age¹ a longevity of a lakh of years,² with their life centred in the marrow,³ and then to give to men in the Kali age a longevity of a hundred years, and life dependent on food? If one injustice is done, that is no excuse for doing a hundred others. Moreover, what can you do if injustice has been once done? But, as a matter of fact, "Poison is the remedy for poison." What does it matter to you or me if He has made up for the deficiency in justice caused by the grant of greater longevity in the Satya than in the Kali age, by, according to Sādhana, a more rapid effect in the Kali age than in the Satya age? In fact, in Him there is neither deficiency nor the reverse. In this drama of the world He is both the Chief Actor and the Chief of Actresses. This drama commenced in the beginning with the union of Actor and Actress, and will conclude, according to His unfailing will, at that night which is the end of time.

Those who are acquainted with the principles of Sanskrit drama know that it is composed in the form of the tail of a cow.⁴ I do not know on what evidence rhetorical poets discovered this form of composition, but, so far as one can surmise, it appears that form was adopted in imitation of the ideal drama of that Primeval Poet,⁵ the Creator of the universe. From the description of the four ages—namely, Satya, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali⁶—it would seem that in the ideally composed play of the universe the chain of things from Brahmā, the Hiranyagarbha and grandfather⁷ of men, to the close of the Kali age is arranged in the form of a cow's tail. When the close of the play approaches, the King of actors, Mahākāla,⁸ will after hastily withdrawing all the materials for the play, lay down to rest upon the couch of Mahāpralaya⁹ in the last world-scene, the great cremation ground strewn with ashes. The Mother, the Queen of actresses and Charmer of Mahākāla,¹⁰ will place Her right foot on His heart, and, losing Herself in the waves of love and joy of the great mass of

¹ The first, or golden age, marked by virtue, prosperity, happiness, health, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). ² 100,000.

³ The Hindu belief is that in the first age life was centred in the marrow, in the second age in the bones, in the third age in the blood, and in the last or present age is dependent on food.

⁴ As Śloka, 277, of the Sāhitya Durpaṇa, says: Gopuchchhāgrasamagrantu vandhanantasya kīrtitam. The acts of a drama should be so arranged as to be reduced in size from the first to the last, just as the tail of a cow beginning broadly tapers to a point.

⁵ Brahmā, so called in the Śrīmadbhāgavata, and elsewhere.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Lokapitāmaha.

⁸ Śiva (see Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. v).

⁹ The great dissolution of things, when all will return to that from which they on the morning of the day of Brahmā originated.

consciousness,¹ appear, as it were, a dancer maddened by untiring dancing. The hasty closing and destruction of the Kali age is but a preparation for this dancing, and nothing else. The thought of this scene may make the unbelieving and impious tremble with fear, but these happy tidings will raise joyous waves of love in the heart of the devout. The will of Her whose substance is will² shall be fulfilled, for it is in the power of none to frustrate it.

Next, when you become jealous at the mere mention of His unfathomable mercy towards His creatures of the Kali age as compared with that which He showed to those of the Satya age, it would seem as if you thought that the creatures of these two ages constituted two distinct classes at feud one with the other, and never meeting in each other's home. A creature of the Satya age will not (you suppose) appear in the Kali age, and one of the latter age will not have appeared in the former. No matter; be it so. But I ask: Everyone admits that not every creature in the first three ages has attained Siddhi,³ nor, on the other hand, is everyone in the Kali age devoid of Siddhi. What, then, is the fate of such Sādhakas⁴ of the first three ages who have not attained Siddhi, and of such men of the Kali age as are not, but are about to become, Sādhakas? According to your argument, no creature of the Kali age will have appeared in the Satya age, and no individual of the latter age will appear in the Kali age. In other words, at the close of these ages such persons will attain either Nirvāṇa,⁵ and be totally absorbed in the Parabrahman,⁶ or will sink at once into an eternal hell. Blessed be this judgment to which your justice leads you! What an unerring decision!⁷ You were startled at hearing that the Jīva⁸ in the Kali age can attain Siddhi in one lifetime. But the Jīva of your Satya age attains Nirvāṇa the moment it commences Sādhana. It may thus, indeed, happen that a man who by good fortune is born at the close of the Satya age may attain without labour in one life, and by the mere circumstance of his birth at the close of that age, that same Siddhi which another has only attained in the same

¹ Cidghana. Cit, the pure Brahman, is the hearth of fire from which, according to the Lalitā, the Devī springs (Cidagnikuṇḍasambhūtā).

² Ichchhāmayī. The substance of the Devī is the three Śaktis, Ichchā (will or desire), Jñāna (knowledge), and Kriya (action).

³ That is, become a siddhapuruṣa.

⁴ That is, those worshippers who practise Sādhana.

⁵ That is, complete unconditioned Mukti, as distinguished from the temporary and conditioned padas known as Śālokya, Śārūpya, Sāmīpya, and Sāyujya.

⁶ The unconditioned, attributeless or higher Brahman, as contrasted with the same Brahman manifesting itself with attributes in creation—the apara or "lower" Brahman.

⁷ Valihari.

⁸ The embodied spirit, which is the supreme spirit, viewed under the

age by the practice of austerities for ten million years.¹ Advocate of Justice, tell me now of what kind of justice is this the impartial and carefully considered opinion?

You and I, whose knowledge does not extend beyond, at most, a hundred years, are not in a position to argue as regards that justice, the wheel of which turns but once in eighty-four lakhs² of births. In the Viśvasāra Tantra the Śāstra says: "There is no birth like unto the human birth. Both Devas³ and Pitṛs⁴ desire it. For the Jīva the human body is of all bodies the most difficult to come by. For this it is said that human birth is attained with extreme difficulty. O Pārvatī,⁵ amongst those beings who have obtained this rare human birth, those who have conquered all doubt are very few, and of those who have conquered doubt such as are attached to Mantra⁶ and Tantra are again very few. Among such pious men as are attached to Mantra and Tantra, such as are proficient in Tantra, which is adored by all, are the best; and, again, amongst the latter the Sādhaka is the best of all, who is deeply versed in all the Tantras."

"It is said in all the Śāstras that of the Jīva's eighty-four lakhs of births the human birth is the most fruitful. In no other birth can Jīva acquire knowledge of the truth. Human birth is the stepping-stone to the path of liberation. But rare are the meritorious⁷ who come by it."

"O Daughter of the mountain,⁸ Jīvātmā, which decreaseth not, passes through eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic things, insects, birds, beast, and the like. And after that, O Supreme Devī, it attains that human body which is so difficult to acquire."

Jīva attains the position of the twice-born,⁹ having had thirty lakhs of births as inorganic things, nine lakhs of births as aqueous animals, ten lakhs of births as creeping animals,¹⁰ eleven lakhs of births as animals of the air,¹¹ twenty-four lakhs of births as beasts, and four lakhs of births as human beings, having thus in all travelled through eighty-four lakhs of births. When Jīva attains the human body, it becomes Lord of Dharma.¹² It is

¹ A crore, or an hundred lakhs, or 10,000,000.

² 8,400,000.

³ Devas, the celestial intelligences intermediate between Īśvara, the Lord, and Man.

⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁵ The spouse of the God Śiva. The Tantras are generally cast in the form of a dialogue between Her and Her husband.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Puṇya.

⁸ A title of Pārvatī as daughter of the mountain-king Himavat.

⁹ That is, the three superior castes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya which upon the Upanayana ceremony become twice-born, and have thus both a natural and a spiritual birth.

¹⁰ Worms, serpents, etc. A lakh=100,000.

again born and again dies. In this manner, controlled by the bonds of Karma,¹ the Jīva takes birth from various sources,² and dies eighty-four lakhs of times. By the command of Yama,³ Jīva goes to the Brahmaloka.⁴ On its return from thence, it obtains the human body, which is so rarely obtained, and is able to secure from a good Guru initiation in the mantra of Mahāvidyā and knowledge of the truth. Then alone does the Jīva gain the supreme liberation, and by the grace of Mahāvidyā has not to return so long as the universe⁵ endures. In its eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic and organic things, beasts, birds, insects, flies, and the like, the Jīva enjoys longevity according to its Karma. Some live one hundred years, some a thousand, some a lakh, some even more, and some live crores⁶ and crores of years. It passes my understanding that Śāstra can be your authority for the notion that all Jīvas—past, present, and future—of this enormous cycle will attain the highest Samādhi,⁷ owing to the simple circumstance that an age has come to an end, and this in spite of the fact that their Karma is of all forms fulfilled, unfulfilled, and partly fulfilled, and partly unfulfilled, worked out and unworked out, partly worked out and partly unworked out.⁸

But you may, as a last resort, say: "I do not believe in eighty-four lakhs of births." But it does not become you to say this either; for the very authority and reasoning upon which you accept the four ages spoken of in the Śāstras are the same as that on which you are bound to accept the statement as to eighty-four lakhs of births. Both are conclusions of Śāstra. Who will believe the man who accepts one part of the Śāstra and judges the other mistaken? Who thinks the right half of a man's body to be conscious and the left unconscious? Let me put to you a plain question. Why should you not believe? What is the cause of your unbelief? You will say, The number eighty-four lakhs. But I reply that that very number which is the cause of your unbelief is the ground of my firm faith. Who are you to say that, because these eighty-four lakhs of births are unseen by you and me, that what is unseen does not exist? The most you can say is that you do not know whether they exist or not. For the same reason, that I cannot say that it exists because I have not seen it, you

¹ Karma is action and the product of action. Each action produces its necessary result. So long as a man's Karma is not worked out, and the thirst for separate life is not exhausted, so long he remains in its bonds. It is of two kinds, good and bad, both constituting the "impurity of action".

² Yoni.

³ Lord of the lower world and of death.

⁴ Satya: region of Brahma, the highest, or, according to some, the three highest of the upper worlds—Satya, Mahah, and Tapoloka.

⁵ Brahmāṇḍa, lit. "egg of Brahmā".

⁶ A crore is 100 lakhs, or 10,000,000.

⁷ Here "end".

cannot say that it does not exist because you have not seen it. If it is non-existent because I have not seen it, then the world does not exist for the blind man. The blind man, moreover, does not see himself. Is it, therefore, to be concluded that he does not exist for himself? It matters not if he does not exist. But I ask, who is it that affirms the negative? He who is himself non-existent cannot affirm or deny anything.

At the time of the happening of that cause which gives fatherhood to man and motherhood to woman, the child exists in the atoms of semen and blood. He does not see that incident. Why do you, then, without visual evidence on your part and on the faith of others' words believe that those who are called your father and mother are such? Maybe on principle you will object and say that you do not believe in that also. On rare occasions a real cause may exist for this unbelief. But, being a man, can you boldly assert it? Are we to suppose that every father and mother in the world is subject to such a doubt? Such a statement, even if one were able to make it, would be nothing but the raving of a madman. I have no objection to your doubting the eighty-four lakhs of births. But I say in that case let it be strictly a doubt. Do not bring it under the category of things certain. For the doubt is whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not, and no doubt can exist without a knowledge of either existence or non-existence. There can never be a doubt about the existence of that which you know to be non-existent. It does not exist. This is not a doubt, but a certainty. This is why I said that, should you be doubtful, say that you do not know whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not. To arrive at once at the conclusion that they do not exist because it is doubtful whether they do exist is but a shocking manifestation of ignorance. In our discussion upon reincarnation we will set ourselves to dispel this doubt. Here we shall say this much—that when the number of eighty-four lakhs is definitely given, it would be wise to believe in it. Of him who does not admit the fact of reincarnation in any manner, whether partly or incompletely, directly or indirectly, I ask: “Are the eighty-four lakhs of births mentioned in the religious book of any other religious community of any country of which we know the history?” Can either the philosophy of Cārvāka,¹ or the Koran or Bible, proclaim boldly that the Jīva takes eighty-four lakhs of births? Whose sight can stretch to the extremity of the universe, so as to be able to penetrate through the molecules and atoms of the fourteen worlds—namely, Bhūh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya, Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala, Mahātala, and Pātāla,² and thus

¹ Sceptic and atheist.

² The worlds from Bhūh (the earth) to Satyaloka are the upper world, and from Atala to Pātāla the nether worlds, which according to some accounts must

gaining knowledge of the nature of every Jīva with grave solemnity affirm and say: "Jīva has eighty-four lakhs of births. True, true, true again—true, there is no doubt." Not to speak of pointing this out, how can one even boldly say that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs? The Jīva, through change of the curtain of memory in every birth, forgets its previous birth. Its memory is opened and closed. It is not, then, within its power of intelligence to say with certainty, either by philosophy, science, perception, or inference, that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. Only that Dharma and that Śāstra can affirm this, which takes its birth in the heart whose substance is will of Her who is the infinite and eternal Intelligence,¹ who dwells in the hearts of all Jīvas who are manifested with Her breath.² Who can measure the extent of the births of the Jīva but that Śāstra which has emanated from the mouth of Ānandamayī³ Herself, at whose feet this small world is but a plaything for Her eternal play? It is only that Śāstra which dances with joy at the sight of the play of creation, preservation, and destruction taking place at every twinkling of the eye which can boldly assert that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. If other Śāstras be astounded, let them remain so. You and I have no need to faint away on hearing that. At present merely understand this much: that as he who can count a thousand has surely known the mathematical sign for that number, so he who can assert the number of eighty-four lakhs of births has surely seen them.

REASONING ON THE SCRIPTURE

You may have heard that a reasonable saying should be accepted even from a boy, and that discussion without reasoning causes loss of Dharma. But perhaps you have not had the leisure to discern what is the subject of that reasoning, and what kind of reasoning it is. The reasoning by which the Śāstra asks you to discuss is that reasoning which is within the control of your intellect—the reasoning of practical Śāstras helpful to discussion. How can you, with worldly reasoning, prove the truth of that unworldly spiritual Śāstra which, if studied and followed with constancy, will develop the intellect and will, and when Siddhi is attained by such Sādhana, open the portals of the super-sensual principle⁴ which is within you? Do not lament because you have intellect, nor be ashamed because you cannot come to any decision without it. It is true that you have an

¹ Caitanya—the supreme is Sat (existence), Cit (intelligence, consciousness), and Ānanda (bliss). The Devī is Chinmayī (Lalitā, third hundred).

² The world is the out-breathing of the Supreme.

³ A title of Devī, whose substance is bliss (see *hast*).

intellect, but the pity of it is that you have not the intelligence to understand what sort of intellect it is. You may feel sorry and ashamed, but that will not open the lock. If you put too much pressure, the key will be broken, and even a Bengal lock¹ will not open. This is why I was saying that if you proceeded to open the lock of spiritual principles with the key of worldly reasoning, even the play of native intelligence will cease, and, being unable what to decide, you will find yourself at loss in everything.² For this reason the Śāstra has, after careful consideration, and taking the oath upon its head, said: "Do not attempt to deal by argument with things which are beyond the range of thought."

What, again, may be asked, is the necessity for a Śāstra, in respect of a matter which you and I can decide by argument and discussion? That is called Śāstra which deals with things beyond the reach of the senses, which are unthought of, unseen, and unattained by you and me. Where direct vision is blind and inference lame, there Śāstra alone reigns supreme. The fact that you and I have got eyes does not enable you and I to see what the animals moving in the unfathomable depths of ocean see. The power of sight is different in that kingdom from ours. You and I are blind in this respect, despite our eyes. Similarly you and I have not the privilege to behold that which the Ṛṣis, seers of deep truths immersed in the Divine bliss,³ have seen.

Many people are heard to say in argument as follows: "How can those whose minds are constantly occupied with the thought of the feet of the Devatā of their heart in Nirvikalpa Samādhi Yoga,⁴ by the complete immersal of their own mind and Prakṛti⁵ in Paramātmā,⁶ find time to observe also the physical principles⁷ governing the molecules and atoms⁸ of the untold millions of universes,⁹ each of which is composed of fourteen worlds? How, again, can Yogis,¹⁰ Ṛṣis, and Munis¹¹ whose state is one in which the illusion of a dual existence disappears through their acquirement of non-dualistic truths,¹² find time to turn their eyes from Brahman to observe the Brahmāṇḍa?"¹³ Brahman, you say, cannot be seen unless the Brahmāṇḍa is forgotten. The Brahmāṇḍa cannot be seen unless the Brahman is forgotten. You argue, therefore, that it is impossible to harmonize these two mutually conflicting statements. We, too, do not

¹ That is, locks manufactured in Bengal, which are (or were) of inferior quality.

² Literally, "to fall off from here and be lost from there."

³ Brahmānanda.

⁴ Ecstasy. See *Introduction to Tantrā Śāstra*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ The Supreme Spirit.

⁷ Vastutattva.

⁸ Aṇu and paramāṇu.

⁹ Brahmāṇḍa, "Egg of Brahma."

¹⁰ Adents in Yoga

¹¹ Seers and sages

deny the difficulty, and, although this is not the place for an elaborate explanation, we will briefly refer to one point.

Poets have said that if a pearl and a javā¹ flower are brought together, the red hue of the javā will redden the pearl, but the white lustre of the latter will not whiten the former. This is because the pearl is free of all impurity,² while the javā is not so. A thing which is naturally transparent will take the reflection of other things, whilst that which is not so may itself be reflected but cannot receive reflection. For instance, my face is reflected in a mirror, but the mirror is not reflected in my face, because the mirror is pure, which my face is not. Similarly in a Brahmanāṇḍa made impure by Māyā,³ everything is impure. Only that one Brahman who is beyond Māyā is pure. The impure Brahmanāṇḍa cannot receive a reflection of the pure Brahman, but is itself naturally reflected in it.

Looking at a spot of ground on the bank of some lake or river, we see only the verdant land and clumps of trees, but not the stretch of water. Yet the instant we withdraw our sight from the bank and cast it on the water, we see everything therein—the trunks, the tops, the branches, twigs, fruits, and flowers of the trees, and their very roots, together with the verdant land on which they stand. We see also the immense zone of the firmament covered with countless clusters of stars. We thus see all things one after another displayed in the lake. But that which faces upwards on land faces downwards in the water, and that which faces downwards on land faces upwards in the water. Similar is the vision of those who are immersed in the sea of truth.⁴ Just as we can see everything up to the very zone of the firmament merely by looking at the water of the lake and without casting our eyes around it, so the Ṛṣis, without glancing at the Brahmanāṇḍa produced by Māyā, cast their vision upon Brahmanamayī,⁵ and see in Her person, whose substance is a mass of conscious bliss,⁶ endless millions of worlds in the hollow of every hair of Her body,⁷ now appearing and now disappearing in each twinkling of the eyes, as it were bubbles in

¹ The scarlet hibiscus, the flower of the Tāntriks.

² Literally, "is dirtless."

³ Illusion, the power of the Supreme whereby It makes Itself to appear other than It really is. Māyā enshrouds and conceals the nature of the Ātman.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ The Devī.

⁶ Cidghanānanda.

⁷ The Kāmika is quoted as saying that there are 224 worlds, which should be meditated upon as if they were the hairs on the body of the Lord. This is the Bhuvana method. Others are the "letter" method of meditation on fifty letters, as on the skin of the Lord of Devas; the mantra method of meditation on the blood of Śiva by means of Mantra; the "word" method, where they stand for the flesh of the blood-vessels of the Lord; and the "Tattva" method, where they stand for the Tattvas, beginning with the earth and the fire, and ending with the ether and the void.

water. No need is there for them to take any wearying journey, nor to waste their lives, nor to pass over the courtyard ¹ of the world so hard to traverse. But they merely, by the eye of wisdom, ² in the bed of meditation, ³ in the house of Sādhana, see that beauteous dream of the three worlds, and that truth ⁴ to which the Jīva cannot attain even in its causal body, and which, notwithstanding the break of ecstasy, ⁵ they cannot forget. Their vision has, however, this peculiarity: whatever you and I, acquainted with the scientific truths of the gross world, see and think of appears to us to be elevated and of uplifted face, as if nothing else in the saṁsāra was more elevated than they; but, on the other hand, the devotees, looking at the reflection cast upon the waves of blood of the causal sea in the womb of Bhagavatī, perceive that that which is elevated in this world is low at the feet of Brahmayī, and that whatever was downcast in the world has, on approaching the Mother, received Her caress and joyfully lifted its head on seeing the Brahman aspect of Ānandamayī. The same things are there in both cases. What was seen on land appears again in water, but reversed through change of the medium through which we view it. For those who only see the Brahmāṇḍa in the Brahmāṇḍa, what can be higher to them than it? But those who have seen the Brahmāṇḍa in Brahman have seen the Queen of Queens, Brahmayī, sitting on a throne made of all the highest things of the Brahmāṇḍa from the regions of the pole-star, moon, and Brahmā ⁶ to the cloud-piercing peak of Mount Sumeru ⁷ on earth. Seeing that all-pervading ⁸ play of Śakti which makes the universe stare with wonder, Devas and Ṛṣis have bowed their heads to earth, and said: "Obeisance, obeisance to the Devī who, as consciousness, ⁹ pervades the entire universe."

"Is it necessary to say, O great Devī, that She lives in the bodies of all living creatures when She is present in the form of energy, ¹⁰ even in such lifeless things as stocks and stones? There is no place in the world where the substance of Mahāmāyā is not."

Man, how dare we expect that that divine ¹¹ sight of theirs and this carnal ¹² sight of yours and mine will be the same? The Śāstra says that this play of the universe is nothing but the play of the waves in the sea of consciousness. Just as those who have gone to the sea, need, in looking at the sea, make no special effort to see its waves, so those who had seen

¹ That is, the surface.

² Jñāna.

³ Dhyāna (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Samādhi.

⁶ Dhruvaloka, Candraloka, and Brahmāloka.

⁷ Mount Meru, wherein is the pole of the earth.

⁸ Virāṭ Tattva.

⁹ Caitanya.

¹⁰ Tejas, which also denotes fire, brilliancy, glory, and energy.

Brahmamayī had not to make any effort to see the Brahmāṇḍa. They did not see the universe with the help of telescopes or of vehicles on land, in water, or in air. When they saw the Īśvarī¹ of the universe it was then they saw the latter² also resting at Her feet. The difference between the sight of those who nowadays display their knowledge of science by a discussion of the principles of matter³ and that of the Ṛṣis is this: The former, in their short lives having seen but a small portion of the small world, gasp out with tired voices: "Who knows what lies beyond this?" However, on seeing this world-play, one only feels that wonderful indeed must be the nature,⁴ of the real form of Her whose play it is, and that if one would have knowledge of that wonderful Śakti,⁵ there are no better means in human life than to study the principles of the universe. It is here that Ṛṣis are wont to say that this sport is nothing wonderful for Her who is full of eternal and ever-novel play. The playful manifestation in the molecules and atoms of a single world counts for an incident scarcely worth mention for Her upon whose mere glance⁶ depend the creation, preservation, and destruction of countless millions of universes. The universe does not appear wonderful in the sight of him who has seen the primordial Śakti,⁷ the source of birth of this perfect play. And therefore the Ṛṣis disregarding the Samsāra with its charming display of actors and acting, have sunk in the fathomless sea of the ocean of Her who, holding the thread of the universe in Her hand, makes all those actors act. They, after an attentive view and the attainment of Siddhi, have thrown up their hands, and cried and said: "Do not let your mind and heart be charmed with the varied beauty of this world. This pleasant illusion will not last for ever. As you hope for peace, surrender your mind and heart at the lovely lotus-feet of Ānandamayī playing on the breast of Sadānanda.⁸ Cast off the threefold sorrow,⁹ and you will then discover that millions of worlds move and move around every petal, every filament, every particle of pollen, of those lotus-feet, and then disappear immersed in the love-pollen of those lotuses."

To our ears these words, though true, appear somewhat strange. To disregard the joys and sorrows of the visible world, and to be immersed in the joy of the unseen Brahman, is a remote affair. For the present anyone who avers it seems to be an unsocial, witless fellow. This advice to run in

¹ Feminine of Īśvara (Lord). Title of the Devī.

² Tattva.

³ Bhūtatattva. The Bhūta are the elements.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Power.

⁶ "The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes" (Lalitā Sahasranāma, v. 66).

⁷ Ādyā Śakti, the Devī as primordial source and manifestation of the Divine energy.

search of something unseen, in disregard of the visible phenomenal samsāra, is thought to be as unbearable and inopportune as would be flippant talk to a person who, disconsolate and with flooding tears, is holding his dead child to his breast, or as would be a request to accompany a funeral procession to a young man adorned and joyful on his way to his marriage. Owing to the unacceptable nature of the advice, you and I consider the adviser mad; but the latter is not to be put off from his purpose by that.

Let us suppose that you and I do not know what acting is, but are present at a representation of the Rāmāyaṇa. The grief of Kauśalyā, the death of Daśaratha, the lamentation of Sītā, the tears of Maṇḍodarī, move us to profuse tears. On the other hand, the heroic valour of Lakṣmaṇa, the world-subduing military skill of Rāmacandra, the pride of Indrajit, the war-cries of Rāvaṇa, fill us now with joy and delight, now with fear, astonishment, and awe. At the same time we observe that someone who is sitting in our midst, but whom we do not know, has been shaking his sides with laughter at the very same scenes. You and I will probably say that the man is mad, but that will not stop his laughter. I say that it does not matter whether or not you call the man mad. Still you ought to reflect why the man laughs. The place is the same, the scenes are the same, the subject is the same. But while all other people are laughing at one time and weeping at another, why does that one man alone constantly laugh? If we seek to know why this is so, we shall discover that there is only one cause for the laughing and weeping, and it is this: You and I have come to see the play without either knowing how to act or what acting is. But that man has come to it with the full knowledge of what acting is. To us Rāma and Rāvaṇa appear as real, and so we make a great display of weeping, and so on. But that man sees that Nīlāmbara Cakravartī¹ is playing the part of Rāvaṇa and that Pītāmbara Cakravartī¹ is crying in the part of Sītā. What to our eyes are Rāma and Sītā to him are Nīlāmbara and Pītāmbara, and so he is full of laughter. We become restless at the sight of the incidents in the play, but that man who sees what is at the back of them is calm. We are calling him mad, but you may be certain that he is forgiving us on account of our ignorance. The man whom we slight by repeatedly referring to him as "that man, that man," is not mad. From the spiritual point of view, he it is who is possessed of the highest wisdom, and is the crest-gem of the race of devotees. He who knows that all things on the stage of Samsāra are merely the materials for the play is not, on seeing the performance, charmed with the acting, but is intoxicated with the blissful love of the actor and actress whose acting it is. R̥ṣis, though calm, are yet maddened

by that love; and so they have told us not to waste this human birth, which is so difficult of attainment, by thinking of the little things of the Samsāra, but to think that thought only which will save us from all further thinking. And, so speaking to himself, the Sādhaka has thus expressed the purpose of his heart:

“The time of life (Kāla) is past, death (Kāla) approaches; let me repair to solitude.

In deep seclusion let me sing the glory of Kālakāminī.”¹

The day upon which you and I shall be on their side, and shall believe or attain the fitness for believing their word, on that day all thinking will be at an end. And we, too, shall understand that the Samsāra is but a mock representation, and that both the things we see, as well as the people themselves who see, are She, the Brahmayi,² full of the bliss of the mass of consciousness who has entered the Samsāra as Jīva, and is revelling in this joyous play. But because you and I have not eyes to see, we say:

“What sort of a play is this of yours, O Mother? It is not a play, but the very father of imprisonment.

The first scene of the play is a gathering on the stage before the actor and actress.

Here the actor is nowhere to be found, so who can find the actress?

With the first act begins the play; next the scenes of a drama are required.

Here, be it the first act or the last, from beginning to end, the drama is full of scenes.

The scene in which the son appears is that in which the father disappears.

Instantly the curtain is dropped before the eye, and then who is the son, and who is the father?”

You and I have restless hearts, and so we become disconsolate with weeping. But the very same play raises waves of love in the heart of a calm devotee. Kamalākānta, the peaceful Sādhaka, has therefore sung as follows:

“You know not, O mind, the highest cause

Śyāmā² is not always in the form of a woman.

At times assuming the colour of clouds,

She takes on the form of a man.

With dishevelled hair and sword in hand,

She strikes terror into the hearts of the sons of Danu.

At times She comes to the city of Vraja,¹ and, playing on the flute, captures the hearts of the women of Vraja.

At times, holding the three guṇas,² She creates, preserves, and destroys.

Oh! She binds Herself³ with her son Māyā.⁴

The sufferings of the world She Herself endures.

In whatsoever form one thinks of Her, in that form She grants one's desires.

In a lotus in the lake of Kamalākānta's heart She appears."

It is for this, I was saying, that in what the Śāstra has said there is nothing to discuss, but there is ground for faith. Of Her to whom the Śāstra belongs, the Ṛṣis have said that that eternal highest Vidyā,⁵ who is the sole first cause in saṁsāra both of bondage and liberation, is the creatrix of all creators.⁶ The creative power of none surpasses Her who is the creatrix of all creators. Whether you and I understand it or not, the unfailing wheel of state of that Queen of Queens,⁷ whose substance is will, is sure to turn in eighty-four lakhs of births of the Jīva. Should you ever after this ask why it should be so, and what is the reason for it, I shall not in reply need to say much, but will simply put you this question: What reason is there which establishes that the present birth has at all taken place? At base the reasoning is the same for all births. For reasoning which establishes this birth establishes that which follows it. If one section of a wheel turns, all sections turn at the same time. This is the law of Her nature. From Brahman, the Jīva who is His avatāra has come into this saṁsāra. There after wanderings and wanderings, it will again assume the aspect of Brahman and be absorbed in the Para-brahman. This is the natural law in the world of Jīvas. In our discourse on the principles of reincarnation, we will enter into a detailed explanation as to the law under which, and the process by which, this will be accomplished.

Should, even after this, anyone say, "Everything ends with death. Who will then be born again?" to him also we shall explain in that discourse that he is probably ignorant of what life and death mean. He who knows the nature of life knows also that Jīva has no real death except that in Nirvāṇa.⁸ What you and I speak of as death is but the death of the mind, and not the death of Jīva. In short, just as it is impossible to make a complete survey of a life in its various stages of

¹ That is, in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

² That is, the three "qualities" which form the substance of Prakṛti—namely, sattva, rajas, tamas (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ That is, in the person of Jīva.

⁴ Power of illusion.

⁵ The Devī.

⁶ Īśvarī of all Īśvaras.

⁷ Rājārājeśvarī.

boyhood, youth, manhood, old age, and so forth, so also it is impossible to judge of the justice or injustice of eighty-four lakhs of births, or even the justice or injustice of any single birth—which forms but a fraction of the entire life of a Jīva. Bhagavān Rāmacandra, crest-gem of the race of Raghu,¹ after killing all Rākṣasas² in Viśvāmitra's yajña,³ threw Mārīca with the force of his arrows to the other side of the sea. On hearing this, a short-sighted, restless man might easily form the idea that Rāmacandra felt weak after slaying so large a number of Rākṣasas, and thus, while able with such strength as he still retained to throw Mārīca to a great distance from the seat of the sacrifice, was yet unable to kill him. But he who has read the whole of the Rāmāyaṇa from the Ayodhyākāṇḍa to the Āraṇyakāṇḍa⁴ knows that Mārīca reappears in the guise of a deer in the forest of Daṇḍaka at the time of Sītā's abduction and has at the same time understood whether Rāmacandra had strength or not. Bhagavān, dweller in Vaikunṭha, who ever relieves the burden of earth, there incarnated to carry out the work of the Devas—the killing of Rāvaṇa. It was because he knew that the work of destroying Rāvaṇa would, later on, have to be commenced through the same Mārīca, that Rāmacandra, instead of killing him, threw him to the other side of the sea. Had this not been so, no greater effort would have been needed to send Mārīca to the other side of the sea of existence⁵ than to send him to the other side of the salt sea. To understand the deep mysteries underlying this play of Bhagavān, the dweller in hearts, it is necessary to know the incidents of the Āraṇyakāṇḍa; otherwise I should not understand more than this—that the Almighty had not sufficient strength in His body to enable Him to kill Mārīca.

Similarly, in order to judge of His justice or injustice towards Jīva in the Satya and Kali ages, I must know the history of all the ages to their final chapter, Brahmakaivalya or Nirvāṇa. Then only can be considered the justice and injustice of the entire existence of Jīva. It is therefore the height of impudence to judge the justice of Her who is the eternal ever-present truth by a life of forty years' duration. If we are to judge His justice upon the strength of reasoning alone, why should we not suppose that it is the Sādhakas of the Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara ages who failed to acquire Siddhi and have therefore been reborn in the Kali age through the revolution of the wheel of time, and the attraction of the mass of their religious merits. This mass, which is nearly ripe, is about to bear fruit through the opportunities offered by place, time, and person. They, the children of the

¹ The solar race, celebrated in the Raghuvamśa.

² Demons.

³ Sacrifice.

Mother, will again get up on Her lap. You say that Siddhi has been attained in one age, but I see that Siddhi has been attained in Kali, the fourth age, after austerities which have extended over three ages. The jack-fruit which ripens in the month of Aṣāḍha does not first grow in that month. It first grows in winter, increases in spring, and matures in summer. The bael fruit first grows in the month of Caitra. It also ripens in Caitra. From this fact a European eating the fruit, but who had never seen it growing, might draw the conclusion that the growth, death, and final dissolution of a bael fruit all took place in one and the same month; but a descendant of the Āryas living in India knows that:

“In the month of Caitra the bael grows
 In the month of Caitra it ripens.
 In one Caitra it grows,
 But in another Caitra it ripens.”

ON MEETING SĀDHAKAS ¹

You may ask, “Why, then, is the number of Sādhakas so small in the Kali age?” But I reply: “Who says that it is small?” You may rejoin that if the number be not small, why do we not see them everywhere, in every village, in every city? I, however, say that the population of a country may be considered to be small if people are not seen everywhere in it, but the number of Sādhakas cannot on similar grounds be so considered. It has been already stated that the Creatrix of the universe, incarnated as Daughter, told Her father that “one in a thousand struggle for Siddhi, and perhaps only one amongst such thousand knows me in my true aspect.” The same was said² to Arjuna by Bhagavān, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. She has again said: “It is only on attaining Siddhi after many births that Jīva reaches the highest station.” Again: “Jīva attains to me only upon the acquisition of knowledge after many births.” In the Niruttara Tantra it is said: “The root of knowledge is that which relates to the union of Śiva and Śakti. Knowledge of Śakti is acquired after many births. O Devī, without a knowledge of Śakti, Nirvāṇa can never be attained.”

How, then, dare you and I expect to see crowds of travellers upon a road on which the Śāstra says they are so very scarce. There is a full number of Sādhakas even should but one man in a hundred thousand become such. Wise men have said that a ruby is not to be had in every hill, and that every elephant's head does not contain a pearl. A saint³

¹ A Sādhaka is he who does sādhanā (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*), a

that we should not desist from visiting a Kulasādhaka, considering him to be a mere man. It is not a human body that the Kaulika possesses. The Śiva Śakti aspect¹ is that of which the Kaulikas are worshippers, and is that which the world is so eager to behold. In that aspect Śiva and Śakti unite and, as Ardhanārīśvara,² live in the enjoyment of perfect joy in the body of the Kulasādhaka. To see him, therefore, is the same as seeing Their undivided and united form.

“If a Guru of Kulatattva lives even afar, visit him, but not a paśu,³ even if he be near.” By the term “Kaulika,” worshippers should understand a Sādhaka of Kulācāra,⁴ the characteristics of which we shall explain in our discourse on Acāratattva. By Paśu is meant a person bound by the eight fetters of shame, etc.⁵ “Sacred is the land in which a master of Kula is born. By seeing and honouring a Kaulika one gives deliverance to thrice seven generations.”

“Seeing a master of Kula born in their family and living in their house, his ancestors in heaven say, ‘At length we shall obtain the highest abode.’ As cultivators with craving eyes pray for rain, so the ancestors in heaven pray with eager hearts that a son or grandson of their family may be initiated in the truths of Kula doctrine. Then blessed will that sinless great man be in Samsāra.”

“Beloved after death, masters in Kula joyfully come to me. When a great Kaulika comes to the Kaulika house,⁶ Yoginīs,⁷ with Yogis, come to see and welcome him.” “Even Pitṛs and Devatās seek the protection and pay homage to the great Kaula Yogī. And for this great men devoted to the knowledge of Kula should be honoured and worshipped.”

“Devī, such sinful men as after the adoration of Thyself fail to worship Thy devotees never win favour of Thee.”

“When Sādhakas place the Naivedya⁸ before me, I accept it by sight only. But, O lotus eyed, I eat it by the mouths of the saintly devotees.”

“Devī, there is no doubt that if one worships Thy devotee he worships Me, so that he who would do that which is pleasing to Me adores Thy devotees only.”

¹ Mūrti, or form.

² The bisexual form of Īśvara.

³ *Vide ante*, See *post*. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ One and the highest division of Tāntrik worshippers, whose way of life (ācāra) is according to Kula doctrine.

⁵ See *ibid*. The reference is to the classification of the Kulārṇava Tantra. The “afflictions” which are variously numbered, are given as five in the Liṅga Purāṇa. The Devī Bhāg. Pr. says: “In the knower of truth they sleep. In the Yogis they are burned up. In those attached to the world they arise unimpeded.”

⁶ That is, to Śiva’s abode.

⁷ Female yogis.

“Whatever is done in the name of Kula disciples is done in the name of Deva. All Devatās love Kula. Therefore should Kaulikas be worshipped.”

“Pārvatī, even if in any other place,¹ I am worshipped with great reverence, I am not so well pleased as when a great Kaulika is worshipped.”

“The fruit which he cannot obtain even by pilgrimage, austerities,² gifts, sacrifices,³ and voluntary religious practices,⁴ that the Jīva can obtain by the worship of a Kaulika. O, Ambikā,⁵ even if a Kaulika (not to speak of any other) dishonours a master of Kaula, all his gifts, sacrifices, homas,⁶ austerities, worship, and recitation of mantra⁷ are of no avail.”

As a reward for what religious merit can worldly creatures like you and I expect to meet those unworldly great men whose greatness the Śāstras have declared by lakhs of such evidence? To what hill, to what forest hermitage, to what great cremation ground, to what great shrine⁸ have we been? In what Muni's hermitage,⁹ in what saint's¹⁰ humble abode, in what Daṇḍī's¹¹ maṭha,¹² in what Brahmacāri's¹³ abode have we sought protection? What mantra have we recited according to the rules of Japa?¹⁴ What Devatā have we worshipped? In what Vrata¹⁵ have we been initiated? Along what path have we advanced? Restraint of mind and body, contentment, forbearance, meditation, concentration of thought and process towards ecstatic contemplation¹⁶—which of these have we practised? Listening,¹⁷ thinking,¹⁸ and constant meditation,¹⁹ which of these have we done? Of discrimination,²⁰ dispassion,²¹ what have we understood? In the name of Dharma open your heart and say, brother, what have we done to deserve to meet the saintly Sādhakas whom even Devas rarely meet? You will say, maybe, we have not done anything, but still we honour and revere them, bow to them, and anxiously pray to meet them. That is not altogether untrue. We pray in our minds, but what of our actions? Had we acted, we should not have remained satisfied with mere prayer, but

¹ That is, than in the person of a great Kaulika.

² Tapasyā (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ Yajña (*ibid.*).

⁴ Vrata (*ibid.*). Voluntary, as distinguished from those which are obligatory (Nitya).

⁵ Mother, title of the Devī (see *post*).

⁶ The sacrifice made by pouring clarified butter into fire.

⁷ Japa (see *ibid.*). ⁸ Mahāpīṭha.

⁹ See *post*.

¹⁰ Sādhu.

¹¹ A class of ascetics.

¹² Monastic institution.

¹³ Celibate ascetic.

¹⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Samādhi.

¹⁷ Śravaṇa.

¹⁸ Manana.

¹⁹ Nididhyāsana.

²⁰ That is, between the real and the unreal.

we should have run with passionate hearts without looking at the path, and having found him, we would have prostrated ourselves and clasped his feet, and said: "Lord, I have made no provision. How shall I be saved?" Say truly, O brother, has anyone's heart wept in this fashion? If it had, it would not have had to weep any more. The pious poet Dāsarathi Ray has, on the subject of the coming¹ of the Mother of the world,² said:

"My child, the mother says, you will come to know,
You will no longer have to weep.
Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping,
The child who clings to and calls 'mother,'
That child holds the mother fast.
The mother is ashamed to let it weep.
Mother does not care for the children who mix with others
And go about laughing and playing.
She does not go to them and easily obtains leisure,
And takes the child who weeps on her lap."

O Thou who art full of mercy for the poor, tell me, O Mother, when will the day come for Thy Sādhaka, when I shall weep as I ought to weep for Thee, the day on which Thou wilt come and say: "No longer weep. Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping?"

A patient in delirium suffering from Sānnipātika fever³ feels no sorrow. Hari, Hari,⁴ shall we learn to weep? If, when we are at worldly work, anyone should happen to stand before us in the dress of a Sādhaka we instantly leave the work, and with all the frown and fury at our command, expel him from our house and then find peace. Being such as we are, will our sinful hearts weep to obtain Sādhakas, instead of weeping for Hell. O thou Dweller in the Heart! O thou Saviour! Dost thou know, O Mother, how long it will be before we are delivered of this sin? With a heart such that the very attempt to speak of it makes me fear because of the fearful visions of sin which it raises before my eyes, I am prepared to dishonour Śāstra, Sādhu, and Dharma. With such a heart again I proceed to meet Sādhus. How great is my shamelessness! To say that were there living any saintly Sādhaka, he would surely one day or other meet me in my house, argues great vanity on my part. What a ridiculous display of impudent presumption!⁵ Why, what Indras, Candras, Vāyus or Varuṇas, have you and I become that we should meet Sādhakas without having to stir from our houses? You will say, you

¹ Āgamanī.

² Jagadambā, a title of the Devī.

³ A violent fever, said to affect the blood and produce delirium.

⁴ Name of Visnu.

have learning, wealth, and a following. You have. But what is that to the Sādhaka? It is our mistake which leads us to tell him we have learning. Shall I speak of learning to him who, through the grace of Mahāvidyā, holds the eight forms of Siddhi¹ in the palm of his hand? Shall I boast of my wealth to those who, possessing the priceless wealth of the feet of Tārā,² consider even the position of an Indra as of no worth? I want to show the strength of my following to the son of that Mother, Creatrix of all, Whose very glance commands the service of everyone from Śaṅkara³ Himself to the molecules and atoms of the Brahmāṇḍa! How mighty is the strength of my intellect! And even should we, whilst sitting at home, or going to places of pilgrimage, or moving about cremation grounds or places of execution, ever come across Sādhakas are we able to recognize them? Have we come to know Devatā because He is installed in every house?⁴ When, after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Bhagavān Nṛsimhadeva⁵ wished to grant a boon to Prahlāda,⁶ crest-gem of devotees, the latter at once said: "As worldly persons who are unable to discriminate the unreal from the real, form lasting attachments to wife, children, and other things, so often as they willingly or unwillingly constantly think of them, so may I constantly remember Thee. May my love for Thee never forsake me." Bhagavān, the abode of the supreme love, was then standing in a visible form before him, but yet Prahlāda did not say: "I want Thee." Without seeking Bhagavān himself, he prayed that he might have devotion towards Him. For, Prahlāda, the crest-gem of those who have true knowledge,⁷ knew that the presence of Bhagavān was not rare, since He pervades the universe. He knew, however, that what is rare is devotion to His feet. To him who desires to possess devotion, the presence or absence of Bhagavān are the same, since there can be no realization of Bhagavān without piety. But if a man have devotion, Bhagavān, even though he were at a distance of hundred crore of yojanas⁸ must appear before him wherever, and in whatsoever form, he desires. Just as the water of a river when mingling with the sea cannot be distinguished from it, so the existence of a devotee mingling with

¹ The eight great powers, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² One of the ten great forms (Daśa Mahāvidyā) of the Devī (see Daśa Mahāvidyā, Upāsanā Rahasya, by Prosanna Kumar Śāstri).

³ Śiva.

⁴ Referring to the image (Pratimā) installed in Hindu households.

⁵ Viṣṇu in his man-lion incarnation, undertaken for the destruction of the atheist Hiraṇyakaśipu, who had cruelly tortured his son Prahlāda because the latter was a devotee of Viṣṇu.

⁶ For his great devotion to the Deva.

⁷ Literally, persons proficient in tattva.

Parameśvara Himself. We do not deny this, but would point out that the very Veda which they know to be the language of Parameśvara has been described to be Brahman Itself by its Revealers, those three most worshipful Devas.

In the Vṛhannīla Tantra¹ it is said:

“Daughter of the mountain! know the Veda to be Brahman Itself. The Veda has no author, but is self-manifested. Of yore the Veda was sung by Bhagavān to Svayambhū Brahmā.² From Mahādeva Himself³ to the Ṛṣis all are, age after age, the remembrancers of the Veda, but none is its author.”

The Śāstra says that the Rg Veda and other Vedas came out with the breath of Brahma. Many consider this to be strong evidence of Parameśvara's authorship of the Veda. But it is not that, but evidence of the revelation of the Veda. Because the Veda was breathed out by Brahma, it does not follow that He was its author, for no one is the author of his own breath. We are simply instruments of inspiration. None of us is their creator. For he who can create breath is indestructible even in the great dissolution of things.⁴ Brahma's body, unlike our own, is not made of gross matter consisting of the five elements. That body of His is all Himself, full of the play of eternal consciousness. It is some particular part of Himself which has emanated from Him as Veda in the form of breath. This is why the Śāstra has said: “Daughter of the mountain, know the Veda to be Brahma Himself.”

Bhagavān, though capable of creating all things, is incapable of creating another like Himself—that is, something which is not Him but is yet similar to Him. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Gaṅgā, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Kālī, whomsoever you may mention, all are Himself. You cannot point to anyone who is different from, and yet is like, Him. Had there been, or could have been, another like Him, he would never have been sole Mistress⁵ without a second.⁶ As I can only appear and disappear with my own selfness, but cannot create another like myself, so Brahma, too, cannot create the Veda, which is but another aspect of Himself. He merely reveals the Veda as His expiration at the beginning of creation, and withdraws it as His inspiration at the time of the great dissolution. The Śāstra has therefore said: “In respect of the sayings of a man, it is permissible to inquire whether there be error or not, but in the case of the Veda, as it has no author, the question of error does not arise at all.”

Here someone may say that, if that be so, Parameśvara's⁷ creation itself is an impossibility, for if you and I, and every other Jīva are all He

whom then does He create? If, however, creation by Brahma becomes impossible, we are not at all afraid. Why should the descendants of Āryas be astonished to hear that "there is no creation," when all their Śāstras freely say that, in a real spiritual sense, there is no creation, preservation and destruction by Brahma, all such being a mere illusive display? As a matter of fact, although in a real sense there is no creation, yet for us Jīvas subject to Māyā, of which we are the product, creation undoubtedly exists. But the Veda was not created even in the sense of that which we call creation. Just as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and the other incarnations are the eternal Brahman, so is the Veda. Just as It, although self-manifest, manifested Itself in the womb of Kauśalyā¹ or Devakī² by means of its Māyā; so also the Veda, though self-manifest, appeared in the heart of Bhagavān, and came out with His breath at the will of Her whose very substance is will. The Vedas, Purāṇas, Tantras, and other Śāstras, are self-manifest and self-evident. Language, which is the gross form of sound, is its own author.³ It matters very little if at the first hearing these things seem impossible. In our discussion as to the principles of Mantra, we shall proceed to decide this point according to the Śāstras. For the moment the Sādhaka will excuse me a few intervening Chapters.

Here let us understand what harm will result if the Dharma Śāstra of the Āryas is supposed to be of human origin. What is that defect for fear of which it has been declared to be self-manifest and emanent with the breath of Īśvara? We reply not for fear of any defect. The Veda is called self-manifest because it is so. It is not for fear of darkness that we admit the fact that light gives lustre. Whether darkness be present or not, it is for ever evident that a light is self-manifest. That which cannot be manifested by another, but which itself makes manifest all things, is called self-manifest. The Śāstra says: "There is no need to sweeten by means of something else a thing which is sweet by nature, and which imparts sweetness to things which are not sweet, nor is there anything which can impart sweetness to that which is naturally sweet. We sweeten things like milk, cream and curd with gur,⁴ sugar-candy, honey and the like. But there is no need to sweeten honey in a similar way; nor is there anything in the world which can sweeten honey. We reveal the courtyard and interior of a house, and all things in it by a light. But to reveal that light another is not required. The light reveals itself, and is therefore called self-manifest. Light alone of all things in the world possesses the power to reveal. Light is itself luminous; what else, then, can reveal it? Like honey and light, the Veda also is self-manifest. The Veda reveals

¹ Mother of Rāma.

² Mother of Kṛṣṇa.

³ That is sound in the subtle state and which exists in gross form as speech

imagination? It matters not if you explain them away as mere imagination, but save your own head. If you call it all imagination, then, as the salt sea is imagination, as Bhāratavarṣa is imagination, so you and I too are imagination. We would advise you, instead of calling so many things imagination, to consider yourself alone as imaginary, in which case all trouble will be at an end. Not to speak of you and I, who are but the meanest of insects, even those whose acute and overpowering intellect penetrated into Brahmaloka¹ have, when dealing themselves with things which are beyond the senses, trampled on all kinds of evidence, and loudly declared to the world "Śāstrayonitvāt."² In that deeply dark place where all kinds of evidence fail, Śāstra alone is the glowing light. We know not how powerful must be the evil Karma³ acquired from birth to birth of him who suspects or believes the Śāstra to be of human authorship. It is said⁴: "Thieve not, lie not, believe in and love the Creator, and you will attain eternal peace." A Dharma Śāstra, the foundations of which are based on a few such settled maxims as these may be the fruit of extensive experience. To be induced by such a form of faith to doubt or disbelieve the Sanātana Dharma and Sanātana Śāstra,⁵ visible manifestation of Brahman himself, is the greatest degradation possible. It may be that in the case of that Śāstra which has as its main object the maintenance without conflict of a balance between the four actions of eating, sleeping, fearing, and sexual intercourse, its responsibility may cease with the provision of a few such maxims as "Thieve not, lie not, etc." It is, however, the greatest impudence for us to discuss the truth or otherwise of that Śāstra the object of which is to declare the principles relating to the molecules and atoms of the endless crores of Brahmāṇḍas, each consisting of fourteen worlds. These principles we shall state, so far as it lies in our power, in our discourse on worship.⁶ Man is imperfect, and whatever he does is imperfect. The imperfect can never attain the goal, and that which has not reached the goal is ignorant of the full truth about the Brahman. Who dare proceed along an unseen path in reliance upon the word of such an ignorant guide? Instead of relying upon their own words, Devas and Ṛṣis have therefore admitted the evidence of Śāstra, composed of authoritative sayings, to be alone the sole authority.

¹ The highest of the seven upper worlds.

² "On account of its having Śāstra as its source," the third aphorism of the First Part, chap. i, in the Vedānta Sūtra.

³ Prārabdha, or that Karma which has begun and is already bearing fruit (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, "Karma").

⁴ By "reformed" Hinduism.

⁵ The eternal and immutable scripture and code of duty of the Hindus.

Responsibility for the education of children always rests with the parents. How can a senseless child be saved unless warned by parents, who point out to it which is the path of life, and which is the path of death? It is under this responsibility that, after the declaration of the truth, Bhagavān Himself has, descending on earth in the form of Śāstra, said: "Both Turiya¹ and Śabda Brahman² are my eternal bodies." Though invisible to human eyes, the Supreme Creatrix,³ taking the world which She maintains upon Her lap has, as it were, with the finger, pointed out, and declared: "Do not, through misunderstanding, fall away from truth, and Dharma, and the Veda. Do not stray from the path of right practice."⁴ Following upon the echo of that solemn sound, millions of sacrificial pits⁵ have been lighted on mountains, riverbanks, in fields, forests, hermitages, temples, sacrificial chambers of monarchs, and householders, and in the abodes of celibate ascetics. The very tops of the palaces in Heaven⁶ have been reddened with the light of the sacrificial fires on earth. None can say how many millions of Āryan great men⁷ have done sacrifices in religious observances⁸ extending over twelve, a hundred, and a thousand years, and have with bodies cleansed of sin by their austerities,⁹ entered through its open portals the Brahmaloaka.¹⁰

INTRODUCTION OF TANTRA

The curtain of the drama of time gradually and inexorably continued falling. Slowly evil days of unrighteousness,¹¹ murky with Māyā, continued to cast a gloom of impure practices¹² over the world of Dharma. Unknowingly, men steeped in that darkness began to enter wrong paths. Disease, sorrow, grief, and anguish sorely oppressed the life of the world.

A diseased child brings death on itself by eating, under the influence of delirium, unwholesome food. Although the child does not understand,

¹ The fourth state of consciousness above dreamless slumber (suṣupti), the sleep of dreams (svapna), and the awakening (jāgrat). According to the Upaniṣads, there are the three last states; three functions—*viz.*, creation, preservation, destruction; and the three individual Jiva (Viśva, Taijasa, Prajñā), the collective Jiva (Vaiśvānara, Hiranyagarbha, Sūtrātman), and the Paramātmā. The fourth state above these is the Turiya. Śaiva doctrine speaks of a nameless fifth beyond Turiya, and two functions, *viz.*, Turodhana, the function of Īśvara, and Anugraha, the function of Sadāśiva.

² The manifested Brahman with attributes—the sound or word as distinguished from the attributeless, unmanifested absolute—the Parabrahman.

³ Parameśvarī—the Devī.

⁴ Ācāra.

⁵ The Kuṇḍa, in which the sacrificial fire is lighted.

⁶ Svarga.

⁷ Mahāpuruṣa.

⁸ Vrata.

⁹ Tapas.

¹⁰ The highest, or the three highest, of the fourteen worlds.

the Mother, who foresees the consequences, does. The thought of the child's inevitable harm naturally pains the heart of the mother, who is goodness incarnate. In accordance with this natural law, the loving heart of the good All-Mother Creatrix of the three worlds was moved, and the Mother, deluded by Her own play with a grieving heart, questioned Vaidyanātha,¹ saying: "Deva of Devas, how shall the Jīva be saved?"

In the Kulārṇava Tantra we read:

"Devī said: 'Bhagavān, Thou art the Deva of even Devas, Thou art Īśvara, the ordainer of the five duties, omniscient, easily approached by devotion, and merciful to thy supplicants. Though Parameśvara, Thou art the Īśvara² of Kulasādhakas and the only source of the nectar of mercy. Deva, in this worthless dark Samsāra, all Jīvas are oppressed with the gloom of sorrow. The countless multitude of Jīvas inhabiting all kinds of bodies constantly suffer the pains of both birth and death. There is no end of all this. None is happy, but all are oppressed with a deep sorrow. O chief of Devas and Lord, tell me how these may be delivered from the bonds of existence.'"

Here the Mother has given full expression to the purpose for which She has willingly become the Mother of the world. The heart of the Mother of the world was the first to weep at the sight of its miseries. Though Herself ever changeless, Her heart throbbed with the agitation caused by the immense rolling waves of emotion into which Her eternal mercy was now thrown. "Mother, this Brahmāṇḍa is Thy image and reflection. Thou seest Thine own face in the mirror of Māyā, and art intoxicated with Thine own love. The day upon which, at sight of the misery of the world, Thy mercy shadowed with gloom that everjoyful countenance of Thine, on that same day the countenances of Thy children were shadowed with the thought of the pain which comes of separation from Thy love. From that day the world which had been separated from its Mother knew the love of the Mother's heart. From that day Thy children in the universe have learnt to call Thee by various names: Durgā, when they have fallen amidst the insurmountable difficulties of the world; Tārā, when they behold the huge waves of the ocean of existence so difficult to traverse; and Kālī, when crushed by the torment of a terrible fate. Glory to the stream of mercy in the merciful Mother. Glory to the wave of pity in Her who is full of pity. Glory to the Mother's endless love. From that day the never-ceasing currents of Thy love flow through all the veins, the marrow of the bones, and the heart of Jīva. And so to-day, O Mother, should even a vile, hellish sinner like myself

¹ Śiva, as chief physician of all human ills.

² That is, though He is the supreme Lord and Guide of all, He is in

forget in his danger all else, he cannot forget Thy name. Whenever the fearful form of danger appears, Someone opens, as it were, the door of the heart, and at that instant the courtyard of the universe resounds with the cry: 'Victory, Victory, Victory to Tārā!' I know not whether others hear the sound; but, Mother, since Thy own substance is the sounds Nāda and Bindu,¹ what sound, then, wilt Thou hear? Whether Thou hear it or not, I hear, O Mother, that as I sound 'Victory to Tārā,' another instantly arises as an echo: 'Fear not, have no fear.' Who is that Other, O Mother? Glory to Thy eternal play. O Mother! Thou knowest and Father knows."

When the pain of disease becomes unbearable, I am instantly healed by saying: "O Mother!" But the disease is again made worse by the taking of a bad diet. The heart is again attacked by doubts, misgivings, and reasonings. Nowadays our ears are constantly tormented by the ravings of that Sannipātika delirium. Wherever we go we hear: "Why is there the Tantra when there is the Veda?" The patient does not understand that the delirium has got worse, and that his end is near. Upon this the chief of Physicians² is at a loss to discover what He should do. He then searches His entire store of remedies, and prescribes rasāyana.³ At other times it is poison, but for delirium it is the elixir of life.⁴ In a healthy body poison is the messenger of death, but in delirium it acts as a great mantra, renewing life. This is the reason why, O Sādhaka, a Sādhana of acute, powerful, and burning mantras, is prescribed for us in the Tantra. It is when all other medicines, all other Sādhana, have failed that the necessity arises for the Tantra Śāstra, because in the storehouse of Śāstras there is no other Sādhana than that prescribed in the Tantra. Śāstra has therefore said: "When the south wind blows strongly from the Malaya mountains, there is no longer need to wave the palm-leaf fan." By Sādhana we nowadays understand something which has to be done upon one day in our life, like vaccination against small-pox.⁵ Formerly we took the Bengal form of vaccination.⁶ What does it matter that we now take the English form?⁷ Formerly we did both Sādhana and Bhajana⁸ according to the Veda, Purāṇa, and Tantra. What harm (you say) will follow if

¹ From the Sakala Paramēśvara came Śakti; from Śakti came Nāda, and from Nāda issued Bindu. The Devī Paramēśvarī is container of them all (see Śaradātīlaka, chap. i).

² Vaidyanātha or Śiva.

³ A class of medicine in the Ayurvedic system.

⁴ Literally, Amṛta, or nectar.

⁵ The true nature of Sādhana is long and persistent effort and self-training until success (Siddhi) is achieved.

⁶ Vaccination direct with small-pox virus.

we now do them according to the Bible or even the Koran? No other harm is done than this, that life is itself harmed. It may be enough for those to whom religion and duty are mere forced labour.¹ But in the case of those who wish to see Dharma as a thing directly visible, and who wish by its minute vision to realize all supersensual things, their resolve extends to death, their purpose to fruition,² their path to the Brahmaloṅka, and their destination is the Brahman Itself. O Jīvas of this earth! Conceive to what highest of abodes they, after penetrating through this cauldron-shaped Brahmāṇḁa, must ascend, whose final aim is the lotus feet of the Mother of the world,³ kissed by the head of Him who bears the crescent moon.⁴

This great Siddhi is the Jīva's perfect wealth to be gained by Sādhana, without which none can come by it; sought for as it is even by Him who is worshipped by all creatures. Sādhana is the name of that which ends in Siddhi. If I want that Siddhi I must do Sādhana, which is the work of a Sādhū.⁵ So that if I have to do Sādhana, I must become a Sādhū, or if I do Sādhana, I shall, as a matter of course, become a Sādhū.

That Sādhana is of three kinds: physical, verbal, mental. Siddhi and Sādhana I must accomplish with my body, senses, and mind according to circumstances, country, time, and person. Now it must be remembered that all my best wealth consists only of what I shall be able to acquire under the following conditions: It must be acquired in this country, crowded by Varnasamkaras,⁶ Mlechchhas, Yavanas,⁷ and persons who adhere to other religious beliefs; in the Kali age, with its bad practices, filthy habits, oppression, licence, and prostitution; with an impure body where lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy⁸ contend as upon a battlefield; with restless senses, a doubting heart, and in a life which will last at the most a hundred years. All my commerce in the market of this world is with this capital only, and in its use I must both guard the capital and see to the profits. Now tell me who will perform religious ceremonies⁹ and sacrifices¹⁰ lasting twelve, a hundred, or a thousand years? Where shall I get the Vaidik Hotars, Rtviks, Adhvaryus, and Ācāryas,¹¹ versed in mantra for such a sacrifice? Of the thousands of Śākhās¹² of the Veda, but a few now remain as memorials; the rest are

¹ Begār, done by compulsion and without reward.

² Siddhi.

³ Jagadambā.

⁴ Śiva called Candrasekhara.

⁵ Pious person.

⁶ People born of parents of different castes.

⁷ Defiled person and foreigners of different kinds.

⁸ The six sins—Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Mātsarya.

⁹ Vrata.

¹⁰ Yajña.

¹¹ Various classes of Vedic priests.

¹² Branches or school of Veda; the traditional text followed by a particular

lost. Which mantra of which of these Śākhās will to-day draw down which Deva to the seat of sacrifice? From whence will the needed lakhs of heaps of Samidh¹ be to-day daily procured? Will it ever again happen in that Bhāratavarṣa,² in the capital of which a thousand cows are now daily slaughtered, that the milk and ghee of milch cows will flow in streams like rivers? Will the glowing fire be ever again gratified by the offering purified by mantra of mountainous heaps of the holy flesh of animals sacrificed? Will Bhagavān Vaiśvānara,³ with bearded face and matted hair effulgent with Brāhmik light, ever again rise from the sacrificial pit and, bursting through columns of fire playing in fearful tongues of flame, stand before the giver of the sacrifice,⁴ and say: "Choose thy blessing?" Will the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha⁵ ever again leave Vaikuṇṭha⁶ at the prayer of Ṛṣis oppressed by Rākṣasas and Asuras⁷ and descend to earth to guard the sacrifice from the harm which they fear? Will a master of truth⁸ like Śukadeva,⁹ or a great Śakti like Draupadī,¹¹ be ever again born of the sacrificial fire? Will Takṣaka, King of Nāgas,⁵ trembling with fear because of a sacrifice, ever again have to seek the protection of Indra? Will the Deva of a thousand eyes¹² ever again be about to fall with Takṣaka into a sacrificial pit, whirled down through space by the power of Brāhmaṇas and the wondrous potency of Mantras? India has to-day lost her old strength and the vigour of her austerities.¹³ Gone is that old faith, strength, and fortitude; gone is that courage. In what an unlucky moment was the fatal snake sacrifice¹⁴ commenced! Then worshipped Fire became displeased with India, because of the deprivation of his worship. Then the mantra power of the Brāhmaṇa became offended at being prevented from consuming the King of the Devas¹⁵ with Takṣaka. That displeasure and that offence has been in operation ever since. The old day has never returned. The curtain of the sacrificial world has finally dropped. It has not been raised again. How contaminating must be the effect of the Kali age, that, despite the presence in their full strength of Devatās, Mantras, Brāhmaṇas, and the materials for sacrifice, the latter was never completed. Who can unravel the mystery of the play of Yajñeśvarī?¹⁶

¹ Wood used for the homa, sacrifice.

² India.

³ Agni, Lord of Fire, or the Bhagavān Himself in His aspect of fire.

⁴ Yajamāna.

⁵ Viṣṇu.

⁶ The heaven of Viṣṇu.

⁷ Demonic beings.

⁸ Tattvajña.

⁹ Son of Vyāsa.

¹⁰ Wife of the five Pāṇḍus.

¹¹ Serpent divinities of the nether world.

¹² Indra.

¹³ Tapas.

¹⁴ Sarpasatra, performed by King Janamejaya for the purpose of destroying all snakes, a snake having killed his father, Parikṣit.

For this reason I was saying: "O Jiva, born in the Kali age, how dare either you or I proceed there where Mahārājas Parikṣit and Janamejaya failed?" And even if we were to advance, would that make everyone happy? Yajña¹ is the Sādhana of only those who desire enjoyment, wealth, and heaven.² Are those who, being supplicants for the ambrosial feet of the spouse³ of Śaṅkara,⁴ set no value upon the abode of the Suras,⁵ Indra, or Brahmā⁶—are they to be tempted by Yajña? What is to be done for such as these? With what Sādhana will you gratify them? You will say by purity of mind and body,⁷ living in the Guru's house, listening,⁸ thinking,⁹ constant meditation,¹⁰ contemplation,¹¹ concentration¹² and ecstasy.¹³ These means exist in the Vaidik path for the acquisition of the truth. True; they exist as jewels exist in the sea. But what is that to you or me? Who can be such a sacrificing monarch as Rāvaṇa that Varuṇadeva¹⁴ should collect the jewels and present them to him? Who is such an Emperor in the domain of austerity like Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Jābāli, Janaka, or Jaimini, that Bhagavān will churn the ocean of the Veda, and place all the jewels of the knowledge of truth in his hand? Who can acquire a heavenly¹⁵ body with the effulgence of Brahman,¹⁶ like that of Naciketa, so as to enable him to go to the house of Yama,¹⁷ and there from Yama himself receive instructions in the knowledge of the Brahman? No more is to be found that Āryan life in which every event from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body was accompanied by Vaidik mantra. It is no exaggeration to say that a heavenly body, the passions of which have been controlled, and which is thus made a suitable vehicle for the development of the knowledge of Brahman according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays impossible of achievement. Need it be said that no longer does anyone lie with lawful wife but once only after her monthly period¹⁸ kindling the sacrificial fire¹⁹

¹ Sacrifice.

² Svarga.

³ That is, of the Goddess, or Devī.

⁴ Śiva, her husband.

⁵ Devas.

⁶ Lord of the Celestials and the creative Brahmā.

⁷ Brahmācarya.

⁸ Śravaṇa

⁹ Manana.

¹⁰ Nididhyāsana.

¹¹ Dhyāna.

¹² Dhāraṇā.

¹³ Samādhi.

¹⁴ Lord of the waters.

¹⁵ Divya.

¹⁶ Brahmātejas.

¹⁷ Lord of death.

¹⁸ According to the ancient Vaidik rule, sexual union must take place once a month, from the fourth or fifth to the fifteenth day after the menses (the conceptual period), and then only, without breach of that continence which governs the married state. The follower of this Vaidik rule is described as Paśu in the Nitya Tantra (Ṛtukālam vinādeviramāṇam paribarjayet).

¹⁹ The union of man and wife is a veritable sacrificial rite, a homa, wherein she is both hearth (Kund) and flame. See the great thirteenth Mantra of the

with a heart set steadily on the Parabrahman,¹ in the desire to get a son who will himself be full of the divine spirit. The ancient Brāhmaṇik fire² has sunk to ashes through eating the bread of servitude to foreigners³ for hundreds of generations. No longer are our blood and seed pure and vigorous with the strength of austerity⁴ and mantra. No longer do parents observe continence.⁵ And so I was saying, long past is that day when the summit of the edifice of the Vaidik Brahma-knowledge could be made to rest upon the foundations of an unswerving purity.⁶ Men no longer meditate on the Parabrahman with closed eyes, restraining the senses of perception and action, merging the mind in Prakṛti.⁷ Amongst those who nowadays shut their eyes⁸ and make a pretence of such meditation you will discern a movement in their shuttings and blinkings even in the darkness. All this is but a show of self-restraint. Bhagavān, speaking even of those who have really controlled their senses, but who have not through habit been able to dispel the mass of impressions which these have made upon their minds, has said in the Gītā: “The fool who, after controlling his senses of action, inwardly thinks of the objects of those senses, is called a hypocrite.”

Is it not a vain presumption on our part to hope to be able to successfully travel along a path in which the discipline is so strict and the trial is of so searching a character? Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was Bhagavān in person, failed to impress the truth on Arjuna, though he pointed it out to him, as it were, with a finger in the Yuga-Sandhyā,⁸ at the close of the Dvāpara age and the commencement of the Kali age. He failed (Arjuna being a Kṣatriya⁹), to make him hold fast in his heart the knowledge of the truth¹⁰ which is the possession of Brāhmaṇas. We are surely, therefore, not awake but dreaming if we hope to acquire knowledge of truth by reading the Yogavāsiṣṭha, Rāmāyaṇa, and the Gītā while sunk in the gloom and under the full sway of the Kali age. We, on the contrary, know that many a spiritually disposed man, who, under the influence of such a daydream, has attempted to become a Yogī along the Vaidik path, has ended in becoming neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being, half man, half lion. By

¹ The Supreme. Similarly the Tantra (Yogini, chap. vi) says that union should be performed with a divine feeling and disposition (Maithunam pracaredhīmān devatābhāvacēṣṭitam), accompanied by the mantras given in the Tantrasāra.

² Brahmatejas.

³ Yavanas.

⁴ Tapas.

⁵ See *post*. It is a mistake to suppose that brahmacārya (continence) is limited to one of the āśramas only. It governs all, including the married state (see Yogiyajñavalkya, chap. i).

⁶ Brahmacārya.

⁷ The Source whence the senses (indriyas), mind (manas), and all the phenomenal being, derives.

⁸ That is, the period of transition from one Yuga to another, reckoned at a thousand years.

constant meditation upon a misty nothing,¹ his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment with the inward lament: "Alas, I am lost!" In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask: "What means are there left for us?" But their only difficulty is this: They want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tāntrik or Paurāṇik worshippers in secret, whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma-knowledge and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock,² or thread,³ or to paint their bodies with the sacred marks.⁴ Is it not deplorable that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles?

It was with the knowledge that man might have to die such an unhallowed death even after the acquisition of the precious human body, which is, as it were, a thornless step to the door of Brahman, that She who dwells in the heart prescribed the remedy millions of years ago. But what can we do? As I have said, a diet which is daily bad aggravates the disease. The musical Sādhaka⁵ has therefore said:

"It is the fault of none, O Mother Śyāmā.

It is I myself who dig and thus sink in the water."

And is that death an easy one? The suffering of that repentance is more unbearable than even the torture of a hundred rods at the hands of Yama. The thought of the remembrance of such a horrible death melts the hardest heart, and flooding tears wet the livid visage of the dying man. Then, with unrestrainable force, a fountain of tears bursts forth from the innermost recesses of the heart.

"What shall I do, O Mother? Day by day the malady grows stronger. I am in grave danger through the disorder of Pitta as Sattva, Vāyu as Rajas, and Kapha⁶ as Tamas. This time the delirium is that of Sānnipāta.⁷ O Mother, it is my destruction,⁸ and thus I weep incessantly!"

At the close of such a life, wanting in trust and full of lament, both inward and outward restraint⁹ are impracticable. The ecstatic trance¹⁰ is

¹ Ākāśa: literally, ether, space.

² The Śikha, or long strand of hair worn at the back of the top of the head by orthodox Hindus from after the date of the Cūḍākaraṇa ceremony.

³ Worn by the twice-born classes among the Hindus.

⁴ Tilaka, or sectarian marks, and Nāma, or names of the Deities.

⁵ Rāmaprasāda.

⁶ Bile as sattva, the manifesting principle; wind as rajas, principle of activity; and phlegm as tamas, principle of inertia.

⁷ A fever.

⁸ Sānnipāta—a play on the word.

impossible. The dawning of the truth that all is Brahman¹ is a far-off thing. In consequence, a journey along that difficult path, with a body decrepit such as mine, is hardly to be thought of. To take to the Vaidik path and then, upon failure to acquire a knowledge of truth, to judge the Veda to be ineffectual, is as though one were to judge a tree to be without fruit after we had touched its roots only, when the tree gives its fruit to him alone who can reach its topmost branches. There is more chance of getting the fruit some day or other without even touching the tree if one has but faith in the existence of the fruit, and takes up one's abode in its shade.

It may seem a mystery hard to unravel that the mere sitting down at the foot of a tree which gives its fruit only to him who can reach its topmost branch, without even touching its root and in dependence on faith alone, will yet one day or other surely secure the fruit, yet, in fact, it is not such an impossibility as it appears to be when first stated.

It often happens that parents walk about in the gardens attached to the houses of rich landholders, enjoying the evening breeze, holding by their hands their son and daughter. It may also happen that on such an occasion a tree is discovered in the garden to be laden with ripe fruit. The parents, desirous of seeing how the hearts of their children yearn for the fruit, speak to them, and pointing out the fruit, say: "See what nice fruit has ripened on the tree." Instantly turning their eyes to the fruit, the rich man's children, bred up in softness and indulgence, are unable to restrain themselves, and at once assail their parents with weeping and the cry: "Give, give, give!" Out of play the parents say: "Then climb up the tree and bring the fruit down." But the children know that they cannot do so, and the parents' fun only fires them with anger. They then throw themselves about on the ground weeping. The heart of the loving mother is melted, and she says to her husband: "Enough now, find out the means." Then father and mother take up the two children in their arms, and hold them up to the branches of the tree. Thus supported by their parents' arms, the boy and girl pluck the wished-for fruit with their own hands and dance with joy. And thus we see that it is not impossible for the children of the rich, brought up with indulgence, to make unreasonable demands, and yet to have them satisfied.

Sādhaka, tell me what King and what Queen you consider to be the greatest in the world? Who is a King before the King of Kings of three worlds? And who is a Queen before the Queen of the greatest Yogī?² She whose feet are worshipped by Upendra and Surendra?³ You and I are

¹ Literally, the tattva of advaita Brahman.

² That is, Śiva, who, by His great austerities, is the Lord and exemplar of all ascetics.

truth unknown to Śiva which was promulgated by His incarnation? How can we believe that a spark can burn the whole world, and that yet there is no heat in fire? As a matter of fact, the principle of monism, which was taught by the Vedānta philosophy, has been brought into harmony with the principle of dualism in the Tantra Śāstra. It is hard to say how many hundreds of Yogīs and Ṛṣis, Sādhus and Sādhakas, have been slain or wounded in the fights over dualism and monism. Bhagavān, the Creator of all things, has in the Tantra Śāstra brought that fight to a close by harmonizing prakṛti and vikṛti.¹ But those who are by nature inclined to fighting ever consider peace to be a trouble, and this is why even to-day there are to be found many dualists in the community of the learned who are hostile to Tantra. But the idea of a quarrel between Jīva and Śiva at one and the same time shames us and makes one laugh.

Looking at the matter with the eye of a philosopher, it seems as if monism and dualism are as much asunder as the eastern and western seas. On the one side monism says that the Samsāra is a mirage, a wave of Māyā, an effect of illusion, just as the mistaking of a rope for a serpent, or of the nacre of an oyster shell for silver. Brahman, who is knowledge, eternal, pure, and without attribute, is beyond ignorance, attributes and the samsāra. He has no desire, activity, endeavour nor is subject to Karma. In short, only He exists, and nothing else. On the other hand, dualism says that He has desire, activity, endeavour, care, and is subject to Karma.² In short, all things which are said to exist, exist in Him. There is nothing which does not exist in Him. Both are Śāstras. The one is not, in authority, either superior or inferior to the other. Which will give way to which? Both have Bhagavān for their witness and Judge. The settlement of this dispute is impossible by mere men. Therefore, to dispel the doubts of the three worlds, She who dwells in all hearts Herself assumed the rôle of questioner, and He who dwells in all hearts and is the beloved consort, of the all-good Devī answered Her questions, and Nārāyaṇa³ Himself accepted the answer as the truth⁴—*Agata*, or issued from the mouth of Śiva; *Gata*,

¹ Vikṛti is, literally, "change," as of form—here effect. The meaning is that the Tantra harmonizes the origin of things with its effects—God and His world.

² All manifestations of Deity are subject to both time and Karma. Thus it is said, *Namastat karmabhyo vidhirapi na yebhyah prabhavati* (Salutation to Karma, over which even the Creator Brahmā cannot prevail), and,

Ye samastā jagatsṛṣṭithitisamhara-kāriṇāḥ

Te pi kāleṣu liyante kālohi balavattarah

(The Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, in time become extinct; because time is the stronger).

or entered into the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain;¹ and *Abhimata*, or approved of by Vāsudeva.²

For these three reasons, and taking the initial letters of the three words, the Tantra Śāstra is called Āgama.³ Where Pārvatī is the questioner and Maheśvara answers, there the Śāstra is called Āgama. Where, to heighten the sweetness of the play, Mahādeva is the questioner and Maheśvarī answers, there it is called Nigama. The Tantra Śāstra is called Nigama by taking the initial letters of the three words nirgata, gata, and mata, in the verse in which it is said—*Nirgata*, or issued out of the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain; *Gata*, or entered into the mouths of the five-mouthed Deva;⁴ and *Sammata*, or acquiesced in by Vāsudeva.⁵ The Tantra Śāstra is divided into these two parts of Āgama and Nigama. Just as, however, there is in reality no difference between Bhagavān and Bhagavatī, the male and female speakers of Tantra, so there is none between Āgama and Nigama revealed by them. The sole purpose of both is to give liberation to the Jīva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the world of duality.

Despite the essential truth of the monistic principle, its comprehension by all is an impossibility in this dualistic phenomenal Samsāra. For this reason it has not been generally accepted as the path to be followed, though it has been preached even to the farthest quarters of the earth by Śaṅkarācārya himself, and successive generations of thousands of disciples who have followed him. Amongst those who have travelled along the monistic path, scarcely one in a thousand has succeeded in reaching his destination safely, without trouble. When we speak of the nondualistic path shown by Śaṅkarācārya, many may think that that which is devoid of Tāntrik practice and is advocated solely by the Vedānta is that path. But we mean nothing of the kind, nor is it our purpose here to say anything as to whether that path is or is not accompanied by Tāntrik practice. This much only we now say—namely that the monistic path advocated by Śaṅkarācārya is one which is characterized by the force of an intense

¹ Girija, or the Devī as Pārvatī.

² Viṣṇu.

³ The author here refers to the definition of Āgama—

“Agatang śambhuvaktrevyah
Gatanca girijāmukhe
Matanca vāsudevena
Tasmāt āgama ucyate.

⁴ Śiva.

⁵ The definition as ordinarily given is:

“Nirgato girijāvaktrāt
Gatasca giriśa śrutim

for his devotees, has said in the Tantra: "In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond both dualism and non-dualism."

Had those who would do away with the dualistic world as unreal been really able to do so, then no harm would have been done. But on many occasions we see that, whether they have or have not this power, they unquestionably do away with themselves. Why do you, who consider it to be nothing, dread the dualistic world, which you think to blow away with your breath? Again, why take so much trouble to blow away that which is nothing? On listening to the lamentation of non-dualists, one feels as if the dualistic Samsāra had been created merely to frighten them. For them there is no peace, love, freedom from disease, or joy in the Samsāra, but only the cry, "Alas, I am lost!" and the lamenting call to "Save, save!" It is as though, from dread of the dualistic world, monism had shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in the eternal Brahmāṇḍa. Where shall it go to save itself? Where-soever it goes, it finds a dualistic world. It is of the dualistic principle that the world-play of Brahmayā is made. Who, living in the world, can understand monistic truth by ignoring the dualistic world? What greater folly can there be than to expect that you and I can with a frown do away with the dualistic world, which even men like the royal Ṛṣi Janaka, Śukadeva,¹ Śaṅkarācārya,² and others could not ignore. Not to mention others, even Paramēśvara Himself, the Guru of all moving and motionless things, at whose feet Suras³ and Asuras⁴ pay homage, made pretence to be deluded by Māyā, and sought protection at the feet of Her whose Māyā it was.

In the Tārārahasya it is said:

"The Deva of Devas⁵ in obeisance prostrated himself at the lotus feet of Jagadambā,⁶ and said: 'Devī, I have been through 120,000 books, and I am yet unable to say what is Kalātattva.⁷ O Sureśvarī,⁸ do thou relate to me that Kalāyoga!⁹ O Devī, lover of devotees, O Mother Kālikā, be pleased with me!' Hearing these words of Maheśvara,⁵ the Saviour of the three worlds smiled and said: 'All men in the Brahmāṇḍa are Thy image,¹⁰ and all women are My image. O Mahādeva, practise this yoga day by day!'"

Let the Sādhaka here particularly take note. Here Maheśvarī Herself is the teacher, and Maheśvara the pupil. Mahādeva is Sādhaka;

¹ The Ṛṣi, son of Vyāsa.

² The expounder of the Vedānta philosophy.

³ Devas.

⁴ Demoniac spirits.

⁵ Śiva.

Mahādevī answers his questions. The men and women of the world are the objects of Sādhana. Though omniscient and Lord of all, Śiva himself is bent on practising this yoga of knowledge,¹ and She who dwells in all hearts warns to-day even a disciple such as Śiva, and says: "Mahādeva, practise this yoga day by day."² The crest-gem of the greatest Yogīs will practise Yoga, and that by means of daily meditation. Though He is Himself the Creator of the world, He must worship the world before the Truth of Śakti³ can bloom in his heart. It is only when it has fully bloomed that the dualistic universe will disappear in the knowledge which draws no distinction between Śiva and Śakti. The disappearance of the Brahmāṇḍa will lead to the knowledge of the true substance of Brahmayī. The Sādhaka will now understand how the truth as to the Brahman⁴ may be reached through Its universe.

To this objection may be raised that there are not only men and women in the world, but rivers, seas, tanks, forests, groves, fields, mountains, earth, air, sky, sun, moon, planets, and stars. How will these be eliminated? We reply that nothing will be eliminated, but everything will remain. When direct knowledge of the truth of Śakti³ is gained, the Sādhaka will perceive that the entire Samsāra is nothing but the wealth of the Śakti of Viśveśvari.⁵ The dualistic world will then no longer appear to be inimical to Sādhana. On the contrary, this Samsāra will then be recognized to be a most spacious and sacred field full of materials for Sādhana. We will fully discuss this matter in the Chapter on the worship of form (Sākāra Upāsana) and the play of Śakti (Śaktilīlā). Here we close, after giving a mere hint of the matter in connection with the subject of the necessity of Tantra.

Next, many people express an anxiety as to the possibility of attaining knowledge of this hidden Yoga during this polluted Kali age. This also is not the place for a full reply. This much only I here say, that just as rasāyana⁶ is the proper treatment for a delirious patient, so also the delirious condition of a patient is that which is proper for the application of rasāyana. By the beneficial law of nature, delirium generates such force and strength in the patient's body that, when he drinks poison, he is able easily to counteract its life-destroying, and to absorb its life-restoring, properties. Similarly, the corrupt influence of the Kali age has generated such a strong poison in the body of Jīva that in the delirium which is born in the malady of existence⁷ he

¹ That is, as Śiva and Śakti are the objects of Sādhana; so are men and women, who are their vibhūtis.

² Jñānayoga.

⁴ Brahmatattva.

³ Śaktitattva.

⁵ Mistress of the Universe.

overcomes the life-destroying property of that mighty cure, full of the fire of Yogīs and Bhairavīs,¹ the Tāntrik Mantra, and with the help of its life-renewing properties attains to the position of a conqueror of death. Consequently, the Kali age is as fit for the Tantra Śāstra as that Śāstra is for the Kali age.

Non-dualistic Siddhi in the attainment of knowledge of Śiva and Śakti existing in all men² and women³ may be new to you and me, but in the domain of Sādhana it is the utterance, ever true and eternal, of Deva. In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said:

“The substance of the world is Śiva and Śakti⁴—that is to say, Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Whether this truth exists or not, Kuladharmā eternally exists. On account of this sovereign privilege, Kuladharmā is the greatest of all Dharmas. How can that which is greatest be common to everybody? That is to say, since qualification for Sādhana in Kauladharmā arises only after the achievement of Siddhi in other dharmas, how can it be said to be upon equality with them?”

It is by virtue of this direct knowledge of the Brahman in the form of Śiva and Śakti that Tāntrik Sādhakas ever conquer the world. Strengthened by it, the Sādhaka does not deign even to cast a look at other Śāstras. To him to whom the realization of Śiva and Śakti throughout the world is a constant achievement, the world is but an insignificant thing. Even the Brahmāṇḍa itself cannot contain the love which the Father and Mother everywhere present in it, bear for him who has realized that Jīva is Śiva and Śiva is Jīva, whether in Suras,⁵ Asuras,⁶ or men, or moving, or immovable things, insects, flies, water, land, space, or in the eternal millions of moving and non-moving things. It is the intoxication of that love that the Sādhaka poet Rāmaprasāda has said:

“The Mother is present in every house.

Need I break the news as one breaks an earthen pot on the floor?

Jānakī goes with Rāma,

Notwithstanding younger brother Lakṣmaṇa is with him.

Bhairavīs are with Bhairavas, and boys with girls.

Rāmaprasāda says: ‘What shall I say of mother,

Daughter, wife, sister, or other?’

Think for yourself.”⁷

Tantra Śāstra has discovered the hidden path by which one may learn the monistic truth through the dualistic world. It has immersed the world

¹ Women yogīs (yoginī), adepts in the Tāntrik yoga.

² Puruṣa.

³ Prakṛti.

⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁵ Devas.

⁶ Démoniac spirits.

of Sādhakas in the current of the divine Bliss¹ by now changing duality into unity, and again from the latter evolving a dualistic play. It has proclaimed the wonderful glory of the beloved spouse of Paramaśiva in the love-embrace of Matter² and Spirit.³ At the sight of all this, one feels as if duality and non-duality were two boys who, quarrelling with each other and maddened by anger, go weeping to their mother, and stand before her in the eager expectation to see whom she will caress and whom she will rebuke. But, on the contrary, the mother instantly puts forth her two arms and takes both upon her lap, when each melts with the love she bestows upon him. Then in their love for their mother, with hearts full of, and gazing upon, her, they both forget themselves in their joy, and fall asleep on their mother's lap, her mere presence having put an end to all their quarrels and disputes. Here the Sādhaka will receive particular help from the last song in the first part of Gītānjali⁴ entitled, "The great subject of discussion between the Tantra and the Veda is the Mother."

¹ Literally, current of the rasa of Brahmāṇḍa.

² Jaḍa.

³ Caitanya.

CHAPTER III

THE EPHEMERAL AND MODERN MONISM

WE shall have to refer to many a picture painted by former accomplished Sādhakas. Here we reproduce two modern examples, joyous and sorrowful, of dualism and non-dualism. Although it is not a picture of pure non-dualism, as advocated by the Vedānta, yet we refer to it as having been drawn in that light. Sādhakas will pardon me for such a quotation, which, though out of place in the Tantra Tattva, is necessitated by the corrupt state of things produced by a revolution in dharma. A thinker, overpowered by a dread of the dualistic world, has said:

“Thy intoxication of pride is unceasing, and Thy desires are unending.
Thou knowest that thy body and mind pass away;
Still thou doest as if thou knew it not.
The seasons, tithis,¹ and months will come as before,
But thou dost not once think whither thou wilt go.
So listen, I bid you. Abandon the guṇas of rajas and tamas.²
Think of Him who is stainless,
And thy dangers will then cease.”

To this song the high-souled Tāntrik Sādhaka Digambara Bhaṭṭācārya has made the following reply:

“Om intoxicates the mind. Desire is eternal.
The body is true, the mind is true.
And so is the Sādhana of Śyāmā.³
Winter, summer, all six seasons,⁴ come, stay and depart.
The Sādhana of the Mother's son endures,
And so does the kindness of the Mother's heart;

¹ Lunar days.

² The qualities of passion and darkness or sloth.

³ The Black One—a title of the Devī as Kālī.

⁴ There are six seasons—viz., Grīṣma, corresponding with parts of March and April (Vaiśākha and Jyēṣṭha); Varṣā, May, June (Āśāḍha and Śrāvaṇa); Śarat, July, August (Bhādra and Āśvina); Hemanta, September and October (Kārtika and Agrahayana); Śita, November, December (Pauṣa and

So I say to you, listen. Cease saying: 'Untrue, untrue' !

Seek the Devī, who is Herself truth.

Free then shall thou be of thoughts untrue."

The Sādhaka will here realize the difference between the two. The non-dualist says: "Thy body and mind pass away—thou knowest this—yet still doeth as if thou knew it not." But Digambara, despite his knowledge of the ephemeral nature of body and mind, says that, though they may be ephemeral in and as part of the Samsāra, yet "The body and mind and practice of the Sādhana of Śyāmā are true." If the mind and body be untrue, how can I expect to reach the true and eternal Mother by doing Sādhana with these false materials? And can you, too, think of "Him who is stainless" with your false mind? The pursuit of the false Samsāra makes the work of the mind and body false. But the work of the same body and mind will turn out to be true if these undertake a search for Her whose substance is truth.¹ If the body and mind be false, why should your dread be true? Next, the non-dualist, says: "Winter, summer, and the other seasons, the tithis, and twelve months, will come as before; but whither thou wilt go thou dost not once think."

These words, however, do not lie well in the mouth of a believer, as if there were no certainty as to where I shall go on leaving the world in which there are the tithis, and twelve months, and other seasons; as if all things changing and revolving in the world will remain, but I only shall not remain; as if this will be my final end.² This is much like what infidels say: "Can the body return after it has once been reduced to ashes?"

However that may be, the believing Sādhaka has frowned upon this lament of the transitoriness of things, and with an unflinching heart has said: "Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go. The Sādhana of the Mother's son endures, and so does the kindness of the Mother's heart." Nothing goes away anywhere for ever. Things remain at the place to which they belong. The only difference is that they go, and return as new things. As in the Samsāra all things go, and return in a new form, so the kindness of the Mother is ever with the Sādhaka Her son in birth after birth. Nothing is lost for ever.

The Sādhaka will here take note of the divine vision of the accomplished devotee. "Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go, but the son's Sādhana and the Mother's kindness alone endure." Everything is ephemeral in the world which you know to be ephemeral. Only the son's Sādhana and the Mother's kindness endure. To the eyes of the Sādhaka privileged to know that truth, the ephemeral world also appears as eternal. Again, the non-dualist says: "I say to you, listen. Abandon the guṇas of

¹ Literally, the true tattva.

rajas and tamas. Think only of Him who is stainless, and your dangers will cease." That is, "These guṇas are merely inimical to Sādhana; so drive them away; do not tread a path infested by robbers. On the other hand, think of Him who is stainless, and your perils will be at an end." That is, He who is to be thought of is stainless. His beauty is of a pure and perfect whiteness. The guṇas of rajas and tamas are, as it were, stains. With such stains one cannot think of Him who is stainless.

Thus we must understand that the white Sattva guṇa is necessary in order to think of the white Brahman. Now, I ask, is not Māyā a bond, and is it not composed of Sattva as well as of Rajas and Tamas? Some day you will have to throw off that Sattva guṇa also. Perhaps you will say that constant thought of the Stainless One will cause the Sattva guṇa to fall off of itself. To that I would ask, Is that thought of yours, which can drive away even the Sattva guṇa, so afraid of the other guṇas that it cannot appear in their presence? Thinker, your thought is full of cares. That it is which makes you so thoughtful. It is because Rajas guṇa and Tamas guṇa ever maintain the false show of the Samsāra that they have to be discarded, and the mind made to rest on the Stainless One.

It is at this point that the Sādhaka says: "Brother, if you are a hero,¹ with the keen sword of Sādhana in your hand, why should you be afraid of the robber? It is only the frail coward who fears him." In reliance upon the fear-dispelling name of Abhayā² you cry: "Victory to Jagadambā!" and advance to conflict face to face, and by the grace of Vijayabhairavī,³ victory will, without doubt, be yours. See, however, that you do not destroy anything in the dominion of Rājarājeśvarī. Put your foes under your feet, and then you will see that these very enemies will be charmed by your dauntless bearing, and become your obedient servants, and will be to you like sons, friends, and attendants. Then joy will overpower you at the sight of the eternal and the transitory playing with one another. Do not despise anything as untrue. Digambara the Sādhaka has therefore said: "So I say, listen. Give up repeating, 'Untrue, untrue!' Seek the Devī, who is truth Herself, and you will be free of untrue thoughts. Just so long as the truth⁴ of Her whose substance is truth itself does not possess the mind, so long the world will appear to be fleeting. When, however, the rays of the beauty of the Mother who is Truth itself come to fill the heart, when the eyes are filled with the vision of the Mother, then the variegated picture of the world is merged in the Mother's Self."

¹ Vira.

² The Devī as dispeller of fear. The true Tāntrik is essentially the fearless one.

³ Devī of victory.

In whatever direction I turn my eyes I see nothing, nothing but the Mother. In water, on land, and in space the Mother dances before the eyes of the Sādhaka, to whom the world thus appears true. When the world becomes full of the Mother, then all the guṇas cease to be enemies. Nothing is then a stain. It is no longer necessary to regard the world as stained, and to look upon another as stainless. When the Mother, painted with brilliant collyrium,¹ dispeller of the fears of Her devotee, seats Herself in his heart, then everything, be it stained or stainless, becomes but the ornament of Her lotus feet. When great waves of emotion rise in the ocean of the Sādhaka's love, then the three worlds sink in the surging billows of its waters. The lustre of the black² beauty of Her who charms the three worlds, falling whereon, lays open the gate of Brahmāṇḍa. Maddened with joy, the Sādhaka also then opens the door of his heart, and sings:

“ He who takes shelter at the feet of Śyāmā
Never goes to the house of Death.
Whose heart and soul revels to drink the nectar of Śyāmā's name.
Whose thought and meditation Śyāmā fully possesses,
For him, in life and death, Śyāmā is his death's destruction.
Opening wide the portals of heaven and earth,
Raising on high the standard in Śyāmā's name,
By his own strength he goes to the cremation-ground;
Yet, having attained Śivahood, he does not become a corpse.
How can he become a corpse whose Yoga has been done on hundreds
of corpses? ³

He who holds in the cage of his heart the Śyāmā bird ⁴
Makes Śyāmā one with the Self,
And ever beholds the Self in Śyāmā.
In love and with joy Śyāmā, uniting with the Self, dances.
Oh, the hair of my Śyāmā is dishevelled!
In Her black hand She holds a black sword;
The dark moon adorns Her dark tresses;
On Her dark face a dark smile plays.
The dark rays of Her body darken the face of the three worlds.
The spirit (Ātma) is Śyāmā,
The body is Śyāmā,

¹ Añjana, put on the eyes to increase brilliancy, to cure redness, burning of the eyes, etc.

² Śyāmā, a name also of the Devī as Kālī.

³ Referring to the Tāntrik Śavāsana, or posture in which the fearless Tāntrik performs his rite, seated on a corpse.

⁴ An Indian kind of bird.

The Samsār is Śyāmā,
 Śyāmā is one's home.
 Nothing exists but Śyāmā.
 Delusion also is full of Śyāmā.
 In the false vision, which is Śyāmā,
 The only cure of this Śyāmā malady
 Is a draught of the pure nectar of Śyāmā's name.
 Oceans and rivers and all other waters
 Become one in the waters of dissolution;¹
 All these are but corpses at the feet of Śyāmā.
 The memory of Śyāmā fills the Samsāra with Śyāmā.
 When shall the form of Śyāmā meet my gaze
 In the form of corpses and in the form of Śiva? ”²

The community of Sādhakas will consider whether he is non-dualist or duality itself, the mirror of whose heart reflects the scene:

“ The spirit is Śyāmā;
 The body is Śyāmā;
 The Samsāra is Śyāmā.
 Śyāmā is one's home, and ocean and rivers.
 And all other waters become one in the water of dissolution.”

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AND SIMILARITY OF VEDA AND TANTRA

The world, of course, appears to be thus blissful in the eyes of every Sādhaka, be he Vaidik or Tāntrik, who by the grace of Ānandamayī has attained Siddhi. There is, however, this difference, that the Tāntrik Sādhaka does not—in this unlike the Vaidik Sādhaka—see a hell in the Samsāra. The hateful and hideous picture which the Vaidik Sādhaka has drawn of the Samsāra, full as it is of wife, sons, friends, attendants, and other relations, is enough to create a revulsion in the mind of even an ordinary man. But it is a matter for great wonder that Tāntrik Sādhakas have discovered the play of the waves of Brahma-Bliss in this very Samsāra, and have pointed out, as it were with the finger, that every process of cause and effect which obtains in the Samsāra is in a direct manner the stairway of Sādhana. It is a matter of still greater wonder that Tāntrik Sādhakas, like fish, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions, the mere contact with which would send you or I to perdition.³ That pure transparent heart of his is not soiled or stained by anything. Even in the midst of fierce

¹ Pralaya.

² The above verses are from the Author's Gītānjali.

³ D. 5. 1.

waves he remains as free as the petals of a lotus in water. A Vaidik Sādhaka, also, on attaining Siddhi, does not think of the Samsāra as being anything but Brahman. There is, however, this much difference, which we may illustrate as follows:

Let us imagine that there is in a forest an ancient royal palace, the inner rooms of which are adorned with untold treasures. I approach the building with a desire freely to see or to take them. But such a foul stench comes from all sides that it is difficult to stay there for even a minute. Unable to settle what to do, I look about in every quarter. I find that at my very side there is a flight of stairs. The lower wall bears elaborate ornaments, but the stench prevents me from standing there to closely examine it. In particular, I note that, though there is ornament, there is no sign of a door whereby to enter the house. I am therefore obliged slowly to ascend by the flight of stairs, and with good fortune find myself at the top of the building. I there find that the entrance door of the palace is wide ajar, as if to welcome visitors. Entering by that door, I descend by a staircase, and in every room discover proof of the incomparable wealth of the King of Kings illuminating it with the lustre of its beauty. Whilst gazing with astonishment I descend into the lowest room. I then see the leaves of a side door flung open at my very side, through which another visitor enters into the building. Astonished and curious, I say to Him: "Sir, I did not know that there was a door here. When I came I examined the wall for a long time but could only discover ornament, and not a door." The new-comer laughs, and says: "There was, of course, the door, but you could not find it." I again say: "But you found it. How was it that I did not?" He says: "You came by the right path, but I by the left one,"¹ upon which the following dialogue ensued:

I. What is the difference between the two paths, New-comer?

N. The decorations of the right path merely beautify the wall, whilst in the left path there is, besides beauty, a device whereby the lines of a door are worked into it.

I. How came you to know of this device?

N. By the instruction of the Guru.

I. But how came the Guru to know of it?

N. By command of the Great Architect who built this edifice.

I. When you pushed, did the door at once open, or was a key required?

N. A key was required.

I. Where did you get the key?

N. Gurudeva gave it to me.

I. But how were you able to stand in that foul smell?

N. The bad smell is on the right path only. The left path is ever pleasant, fragrant with the scent of full-blown flowers, and illumined by their beauty.

Upon this I am very much astonished, and ask:

I. As both are paths to the royal palace, why, then, this difference between the two?

N. (*laughing*). The portion on the left is the inner apartment.¹ Seekers of justice and favour and payers of taxes alone pass along the right path. It is their evil conduct and contact which renders the path on the right so miserable. But should anyone amongst those who have more intimate acquaintance with the royal family desire at any time to see the Queen of Queens (Rājarājesvari), he goes along the path on the left.

I. What intimate connection, then, have you with the royal family?

N. The Queen our Mother is my dharma-mother.²

I. In our country the relationship between a dharma-mother and a dharma-son is a very distant one. How, then, do you call it intimate?

N. I have said She is my dharma-mother.

I. But what of that?

N. You have said that in your country a dharma relationship is a very distant one, but in this our royal palace the relationship is very intimate, so I say She is no mother according to your dharma, but my dharma-mother.

I am abashed, and, taking him with me, leave the house. Standing by the sides of the door, I mark with his help the places of juncture. I see that the lines meet in such a fashion that one cannot avoid giving innumerable thanks to the artist, and showering a thousand curses on the blindness of one's own eyes. The edges of the door leaves are so neatly formed that it is not possible to discover them without knowledge of the secret sign. Looking with ordinary eyes, one sees nothing but decorations on the wall. Moreover, one is likely to receive a sudden fright at the sight of the snake-like markings to be found at every joint. However that may be, I am happy to see and hear. But I ask myself why, in spite of the existence of this path, I took the needless trouble to traverse one which was so circuitous.

Sādhaka, the "I" of this dialogue, is a Vaidik, and the new-comer a Tāntrik Sādhaka. The building is our gross³ and subtle body.⁴ The foul smell which surrounds it is egoism, attachment, delusion, affection, hatred,

¹ Antahpura, occupied by the ladies, who in all Hindu households live in the zenana, apart from the men.

² Persons not connected by blood, but who entertain tender feelings for each other, establish such relationship by making Dharma their witness.

³ Sthūla, or material body of food.

shame, anger, fear, slander, and the like. The flight of stairs is the succession of Sādhana's. The open door at the top of the edifice is knowledge of Tattva.¹ The store of jewels therein is Siddhi or Brahnavibhūti.² The paths to the left and right are the Tantra and Veda respectively. The key is the Tāntrik Mantra given by the Guru. The decorations of the wall are the mechanism of the human body. The door leaves in the wall are the Mūlādhāra,³ and the snake-like markings are Kulakundalinī Herself.⁴ What else remains to be understood cannot be revealed. This much alone we can disclose. The rest, the Sādhaka will understand of himself. The Vaidik Sādhaka does not enter the house,⁵ or even wait a minute on the ground-floor, for fear of the foul smell. He has no knowledge of the Śaṭcakra⁶. In deep disgust he goes up, and there attains the knowledge of the unity of the Jīva⁷ and the Brahman, which is the meaning of all such great sayings as "Thou art that."⁸ But from the moment that knowledge of "That thou art" causes him to see the Brahmāṇḍa as a Brahnavibhūti,⁹ he slowly acquires knowledge of the truth as to Jīva through knowledge of Brahman. And then, not to speak of the ground-floor,¹⁰ even the despicable hell of foul smell which surrounds it appears to him as nothing but the Brahman. On acquiring this Siddhi, the world no longer has any terror for him. Then the Vaidik Sādhaka at last comes to see the Brahnavibhūti in the Samsāra.¹¹ On the other hand, the Tāntrik Sādhaka renounces the Samsāra whilst seeing the Brahnavibhūti in the Samsāra itself.¹² Although the latter is full of foul smells, his nostrils are pleased with a divine fragrance, nor has the Samsāra power to make its own foul smell perceptible or to quench this fragrance. For who can quench that sweet

¹ The Brahman. ² Power, wealth, and manifestation of Brahman.

³ The lowest of the six cakras (Śaṭcakra), or centres in the body, situate in the perinæum, between the genital organs and anus.

⁴ The Devī who abides in this cakra, coiled round the Svayambhū Liṅga (see the *Śaṭcakra Nirūpaṇa*, edited by Arthur Avalon).

⁵ That is, on the ground-floor of the Samsāra, with its senses and passions.

⁶ Doctrine of the six cakras or centres in the body, which is one of the fundamental principles of the Tāntrik Yoga.

⁷ The embodied spirit, which is one with Brahman.

⁸ The Mahāvākya of the Upaniṣads (Tat Tvam Asi), which establishes this unity.

⁹ That is, he sees the universe as a flowering of that tree which is God's power.

¹⁰ The Samsāra, or transitory world.

¹¹ That is, the display of the Brahman in the Samsāra itself which is but its aspect to us.

¹² He neither denounces the Samsāra nor becomes attached to it, recogniz-

perfume which by a natural law proceeds from its navel,¹ and spreads over a yojana?² And, similarly, when the Kulakuṇḍalinī Mantra, with its fragrance of musk, awakes in the cave of the Mūlādhāra at the base of the Sādhaka's navel, the universe becomes filled with fragrance, which intoxicates the world. The Sādhaka himself, overpowered by his own joy, scatters the lustre of that joy throughout the Samsāra. Such would also be the case were the Samsāra really a hell. But, in fact, and when viewed with discernment,³ the Samsāra is neither a heaven nor a hell. It is only that which is its root ingredient.⁴ Just as, by whatever name you or I may call a thing, whether cup, jar, bowl, or vessel, it remains in reality nothing but earth; just as, by whatever name you or I may call a thing, whether earring, bracelet, or necklace, it is in reality nothing but gold; just as water is water, whether you call it a river, lake, or sea; so the Brahmāṇḍa, by whatever name we may call it, husband or wife, father or son, friend or stranger, is but one or other aspect of the Brahmamayi.⁵ You or I may not understand or admit it. But call upon all Dharmas,⁶ all Dharmaśāstras,⁷ and all the religious bodies on earth, and ask them. None will be able to deny the glaring truth told in Chaṇḍī:⁸ "O Thou all-pervading Devī, Thou art the Śakti⁹ in all things spiritual¹⁰ or gross,¹¹ whatsoever or wheresoever they be. How is it possible to hymn Thy praise?"

The whole world will surely and loudly admit the truth of this Śāstrik Tattva. What, then, will you hate as being a hell, or foul smelling? In the Vaidik path the perception of this truth is the fruit of Sādhana; in the Tāntrik path it is both the root and the fruit. The Vaidik Sādhaka first tastes the sweetness of the fruit, and then waters the root; the Tāntrik Sādhaka, though he does not find sweetness in the root, yet waters it in the hope that he may enjoy the sweetness of the fruit. This is the reason why fruit ripens on the Tāntrik's tree long before blossoms appear upon the Vaidik's tree. It is impossible for a Vaidik to attain in a hundred years the Siddhi which a Tāntrik has in the palm of his hand in the course of one year. Tantra therefore says: "Without doubt, Jīva, during its sojourn in Samsāra, will quickly reach the abode of liberation

¹ Nābhi, as in the case of the musk deer.

² A distance of eight to nine miles.

³ Viveka.

⁴ That is, it is only that which it really is—an aspect of the Brahman.

⁵ The Devī, or God.

⁶ Codes of religion, duty, etc.

⁷ Scripture touching the same.

⁸ The most sacred portion of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, reciting the actions and praises of the Devī.

if he but tread the great path of Kula Dharma.¹ For this reason the protection of the Kaula Dharma should be sought.”

Many, whilst admitting without doubt that the essential conclusion of all Śāstras is that She is all Śakti, and pervades all things, yet ask: “What is the use, so long as knowledge of this fact is not realized, of worshipping according to the Tantra Śāstra?” Such an objection inclines one to laughter. We in turn ask: “If the knowledge that ‘She pervades all things’ is realized from the very beginning, then what is the use of Sādhana at all?” It is, in fact, the very want of that knowledge which makes all prayer and Sādhana necessary. It is not want of knowledge which should make one desist from practising Sādhana. On the contrary, this circumstance should increase one’s attachment to it.

To prescribe giving up food because the patient has a distaste for it is not the advice of an intelligent man. On the contrary, an honest physician will advise that morsels of food be eaten every day, so that thereby the distaste for it may be overcome. In Tantra Śāstra, also, the chief of Physicians² has given this very prescription. Different diets have been prescribed in different cases,³ according to the nature of the disease.⁴ But all the trouble and danger of which we hear nowadays in the community of Tāntriks are fundamentally due to mismanagement of those diets. The patient, through greed, eats bad food. Local medical men, for the sake of self-interest (and it may be, perhaps, without knowing the condition of the patient), will assent to his doing so. At last, when death arrives, a number of laymen will come and say that the fault is attributable to the system of medicine, and to nothing else. Similarly, through the disciple’s greed and the Guru’s fault, many an untimely death happens in the community of Sādhakas. Seeing that, a number of laymen belonging to the outside world are of opinion that the fault is that of the Tantra Śāstra, and of nothing else. Hearing this, many people show their intelligence by asking: “Is initiation in the Tāntrik mode indispensable?” Valihari!⁵ What a conclusion! We say: Why take all this trouble, when medicine makes a distinction between good diet and bad diet imperative? May not all treatment be dispensed with? You and I find fault with Śiva and with the Śāstra, but the suffering patient plaintively says :

“Whom else shall I blame, O Mother,

But myself only and through fault of my own?

¹ Tāntrik Dharma of the Kaulas.

² Vaidyanātha, a title of Śiva.

³ Adhikāra, which is also a division of Hindu treatises on medicine.

⁴ The reader should note the following passages; which give the Author’s explanation of the corruptions which have taken place in practice.

I was mine, but said I was Thine,
And thus in a falsity I am caught."

Old men say that if both the diseased and the disease be on one side, not even the physician's father or grandfather can cure him. But as ill-fortune would have it, in our case the diseased, the disease, and the physician are all three on one side. That even in this state of things a few cures are taking place is due to the unfailing fitness of the Śāstra.

CONSENSUS OF OTHER SCRIPTURES AS REGARDS THE AUTHORITY OF THE TANTRA

Who asks the wind to make the fire blaze? As wind comes of itself to a smoking fire and reduces villages, towns, forests, and groves to ashes, so when the first signs of chaos in Dharma appear through the crooked influence of time, suspicious doubt and unbelief manifest themselves, and the heart of man, well furnished with the wealth of heaven, is burnt by the fire of irreligion, and reduced to ashes. Just as a fire first breaking out in a poor man's cottage gradually turns even the royal palace into a mass of charcoal, so if unbelief takes root in the mind of any member of a religious body it makes even the hearts of Pandits of the greatest intellect shake. An inflammable thing burns itself and at the same time any other thing which comes in contact with it. Similarly, an unbelieving man himself falls from Dharma, and also turns others who come into contact with him into unbelievers. For this reason all Śāstras, from the Veda and Tantra to the ordinary Nitiśāstra,¹ have counselled the companionship of pious men.² In the course of time society has long been denied the sight of such. Moreover, impious men have proudly usurped their seats, and, though themselves deceived, deceive society. The Ṛṣis were wont, sitting on the banks of a lake, to worship the Devas and the Pitṛs,³ and to throw the offerings into the water. In the belief that the Ṛṣis are there, and attracted thereby, the fish in the waters swarm near the shore, but, fools that they are, they do not know that the Ṛṣis have gone, and that their place is to-day occupied by fishermen who spread their nets. They who were wont to practise austerities and to distribute for the good of living creatures the offerings accepted by Devas have disappeared, and it is beyond the power of the ordinary man to penetrate the motive of those who have spread nets of selfishness from their place. Moreover, it is these people who lead the hosts of different sects and different Śāstras. They are very often heard to say that other Śāstras have no sympathy with the Tantra Śāstra, and that the latter is not a Śāstra,

¹ Prescribing good conduct.

² Sādhus.

which all admit to be authoritative. By other Śāstras are meant principally the Vedas, Purāṇas, Samhitās,¹ and Jyotiṣa,² and, following them, the Dhanurveda,³ Āyurveda,⁴ Gandharva-veda,⁵ and other Śāstras.

The severe blows of political and religious revolutions have left us but portions of all Śāstras. The rest are lost. R̥k, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva, Dhanuh, and Gandharva Vedas are almost entirely lost. Of Tantras, Purāṇas, Jyotiṣa, and Āyurveda, portions only are extant. All present criticism must therefore be made to rest on ruined columns. Let us suppose that three subjects have been dealt with in the beginning, middle, and end of a Śāstra, and that only a portion of the first, middle, and final part of the Śāstra is extant. Every intelligent man will admit that it is a very wrong inference to draw if in such a case it were said that the Śāstra sought to establish only what was mentioned in that particular portion, and nothing else. It is, therefore, a sign of one-sidedness and shortsightedness to conclude that the Tantra is authoritative only if its authority is acknowledged in such fractional Śāstras as are now current, and not otherwise. Next, if these current Śāstras anywhere assert the Tantra to be unauthoritative, then the Tantra is authoritative; for Śāstra which disproves the Tantra must be subsequent to it. If the Tāntrik cult had not been in vogue previous to such Śāstra, how could it proceed to disprove it?

According to Āryan principles, all Śāstras are without a beginning, so that none is anterior or posterior to another. Even now, in almost all of the extant Śāstras mention is made of all other Śāstras. Such a deeply secret tie binds them the one to the other that, should anyone slip from it, all are torn and scattered. It is, therefore, impossible for one Ārya Śāstra to disprove another. Such adverse criticisms as, despite this fact, we see nowadays paraded as "opinions of the Śāstra" on the Tantra Śāstra, are not the opinions of Ārya Śāstra at all, but the mere outcome of the activity of non-Āryan intellects. Upon the question whether there is in reality any opposition to the Tāntrik cult in the Ārya Śāstra, we shall lay before Sādhakas a few Śāstrik authorities, so that they may for themselves see whether other Śāstras approve or disapprove of the Tantra.

Upaniṣad says: "The Supreme Śiva,⁶ the Author of all Śāstras and ordinances, prepared the eighteen Vidyas⁷ of Śruti⁸ and all the Darśanas,⁹ manifesting Himself therein in play.¹⁰ Being anxiously requested by

¹ Such as the Mānava and other Dharmaśāstras.

² Astrology.

³ Veda of the art of warfare.

⁴ Veda of the art of medicine.

⁵ Veda of the art of music, etc.

⁶ Paramaśiva.

⁷ Branches of knowledge described *post*.

⁸ Revelation.

⁹ Systems of Philosophy.

¹⁰ That is, by incarnating Himself as the R̥ṣis, who were their revealers or

Bhagavatī,¹ who is inseparable from His own Self, He revealed them from His five mouths in five āmnāyas² as the highest good.³ The eighteen Vidyas are the four Vedas—Rk, Sāma, Atharva, and Yajur; the four sub-Vedas—Āyurveda, Gandharva Veda, Daṇḍa Nīti, and Dhanurveda;⁴ six Vedāṅgas—viz., Śikṣā, Kalpa, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Chhandah, and Jyotiṣa;⁵ and Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Dharma Śāstra; and, lastly, the six Darśanas⁶—Vedānta, Yoga, Sāṅkhya, Mīmāṃsā, Viśeṣa, and Nyāya.”

We believe that no one is ignorant of the fact that a fundamental part of Tāntrik Sādhana is Śaṭcakrabheda.⁷ The first aphorism⁸ of the Śaṭcakrabheda comes from Upaniṣad itself. We are unable to quote the Vaidik Mantra in a book,⁹ but for the purpose of illustration we shall refer only to its substance. It says: “One hundred and one nāḍis¹⁰ emanate from the base of the heart. Of these, only one—Suṣumnā—passes out through the head.¹¹ If at death the life-giving Śakti passes upward along this nāḍi, the Jīva penetrates through the gate of Sūryaloka,¹² and attains liberation. All other nāḍis are the cause of the Jīva’s return to Samsāra.¹³ Suṣumnā alone leads to liberation.”

The same is stated in the seventh Mantra of the Praśna Upaniṣad. In the Kālikā, Tārā, Nārāyaṇa, Śiva Upaniṣads, the Nṛsimhatāpanī, Gopālātāpanī, and other works, short but pregnant aphorisms deal with the appearances¹⁴ of Devatā, Mantras, Dhyāna,¹⁵ worship,¹⁶ and other things alone related in the Tantra. This, we believe, is not unknown to any worshipper. In addition to this, the greater part of the processes dealt

¹ The Devī.

² Teachings handed down from Guru to Guru.

³ Paramārtha.

⁴ Medicine, art, code of punishments, warfare.

⁵ That is, pronunciation of words, or euphony, ritual, grammar, glossary, prosody, astronomy, and astrology.

⁶ Systems of Philosophy.

⁷ That is, the piercing of the six cakras or centres in the human body by rousing Kuṇḍalinī in the Mūlādhāra, and leading Her to and through each of them successively, by the passage of the Suṣumnā Nāḍi (see Arthur Avalon’s Description of the six centres or Śaṭcakanirūpaṇa).

⁸ Sūtra.

⁹ This being forbidden.

¹⁰ Generally translated “nerve” or “artery,” but as used in the case of the Suṣumnā and other similar nāḍis, the word also denotes more subtle channels of energy than the nerves and arteries of the gross body.

¹¹ This nāḍi is centrally situated in the Merudaṇḍa, or spinal column, between Idā and Piṅgalā.

¹² Abode of the sun.

¹³ The world.

with in Tantra relative to killing, driving away, and so forth,¹ is contained in the Atharvaveda. Many Vaidik Mantras have also been prescribed in Tāntrik worship. Then who can say how many hundreds of Tāntrik upāsana tattvas² have disappeared with the loss of hundreds and thousands of Śākhās³ of the Vedas? Other examples are unnecessary.

In our discussion upon the principle of Mantra, Sādhakas will be given clear proof to show that even the Praṇava,⁴ the greatest treasure and very pith of the Veda, is not outside the scope of the Tāntrik Mantras. In the Nāradapañcarātra⁵ it is said: "Meditating on the six cakras, Mūlādhāra, Svādiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, and Ajñākhyā,⁶ he sees his own adored Devatā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in his heart, seated on the lotus of a thousand petals embraced by the Śakti Kuṇḍalinī smiling, beauteous, pure, having the lustre of a young cloud,⁷ garmented in yellow silk. In the following Śloka⁸ the great eight-lettered Mantra of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is given:

"Lakṣmīrmāyā kāmavijam 'ng'entam kṛṣṇapadam tathā
Vahnijāyāntamantranca mantrarājam manoharam."⁹

In the Varāha Purāṇa it is said: "Beloved, the remembrance, praise, sight, or even touch of a Caṇḍālā¹⁰ who is devoted to Bhagavān¹¹ easily purifies the world. Lady! knowing this more than earthly power of devotion to Bhagavān, intelligent men should worship Janār-dana¹² by the rites prescribed in the Veda of Āgama."¹³

¹ This refers to the Tāntrik Ṣaṭkarma, or magical powers—Māraṇam (destruction); uchchātanam (driving away); vaśikarāṇam (bringing under control, which would include hypnotism); stambhanam (arrest—e.g., staying a storm, striking a man dumb); vidveṣaṇam (causing antagonism between persons); svastyāyanam (curative and helping power in disease, misfortune, and danger).

² Forms of, or discourses concerning, worship.

³ Branches of the Veda.

⁴ The Mantra Om.

⁵ Chap. iii.

⁶ These are the names of the six cakras situate in the perinæum and in the regions of the genital organ, navel, heart, throat and between the eyebrows, respectively.

⁷ A cloud when first formed—black with a tinge of blue from the sky behind it.

⁸ From chap. iv of same work.

⁹ The author does not translate this verse, which, however, runs as follows: "The charming King of Mantras is Lakṣmī Māyā, Kama bijas, together with the fourth case ending of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇāya), followed by the wife of fire."

Vahnijāyā is Svāhā, the wife of the Lord of Fire. Nor does the author give the Mantra, which is: Aim, Śrīm, Klīm, Kṛṣṇāyā Svāhā. The first three words are Tāntrik bijas of Lakṣmī, Māyā, and Kāma, respectively.

¹⁰ One of the lowest, untouchable castes.

¹¹ God.

In the Kālikā Purāṇa¹ it is said: "The Devī should be meditated upon as ten-handed, and worshipped according to Durgā Tantra." This is merely an indication of the line of worship. The entire Kālikā Purāṇa follows the Tantra. All the bijas², Mantras and Mūrtis of Bhagavān Maheśvara³ which are given for the Śivakavaca⁴ in the Brahmottara Khāṇḍa⁵ of the Skanda Purāṇa are inspired by Tantra.

The Padma Purāṇa says.⁶ "O Devī of beautiful thighs,⁷ the religious arts of the uninitiated avail not. Such a one is begotten a beast after death. How can Jīva be beloved of Bhagavān without Vaiṣṇavī initiation, without the Gaurī's favour, and without Vaiṣṇava Dharma?"

In the Devī Bhāgavata we read: "In this manner in the Satya Yuga⁸ Brāhmaṇas used to make constant japa⁹ of the Gāyatri, Tārā, and Hrillekhā Mantras." Hrillekhā is a Mantra spoken of in the Tantra. Besides this, the whole of the Upāsānā Khāṇḍa¹⁰ of the Devī Bhāgavata is ornamented with garlands of Tāntrik Mantras.

In the Mahābhārata¹¹ we have Bhagavān Maheśvara's words to Dakṣa on the subject of his sacrifice: "O doer of good deeds, I shall again grant you a blessing. Accept it, and hear the message of this blessing with joyous countenance and attentive mind. This auspicious Pāsupata Vrata¹² was of yore created by me. It is a vrata extracted by me with careful consideration from the Veda with its six aṅgas¹³ and the Sāṅkhya and Yoga Śāstras. It is performed with severe and long austerities by Devas and Dānavas¹⁴; hitherto unknown; of universal application and everlasting effect. It may be accomplished in five years, is secret, never blamed by the wise (or it is blamed by fools), and is opposed to the Dharma based on caste distinctions.¹⁵ It is above āśrama dharma¹⁶ and is practised by the great,

¹ Śāradya Adhikāra.

² Tāntrik "Seed" mantras, such as klīm, hrīm, śhrīm, hūm, etc.

³ Śiva.

⁴ Amulet of Śiva, borne as an armour (Kavaca) against evil.

⁵ A portion of the Skanda Purāṇa.

⁶ Uttarakhāṇḍa (last part).

⁷ See Lalitā Sahasranāma; Kāmeśajñātasaubhāgya mardavoru dvāyanvitā.

⁸ The first or golden age.

⁹ Recitation of Mantra.

¹⁰ The portion of the Devī Bhāgavata dealing with worship.

¹¹ Śānti Parva (see translation, Introduction, ante).

¹² Voluntary religious vow or rite.

¹³ Parts (see post).

¹⁴ Demonic spirits.

¹⁵ Varṇāśramadharma—relating both to caste and the āśrama, or stages of life: brahmacārī (student), grhastha (householder), vānaprastha (recluse), bhikṣu (religious mendicant). Historically, the Tantra appears to represent in some degree influences contrary to caste and Brāhmaṇical claims.

who are not afraid of death. High-favoured Dakṣa! Enjoy, without even performing the great vrata, the great fruits which it bears to those who duly perform it. Cease to grieve at the destruction of the sacrifice. Granting this blessing to Dakṣa Prajāpati, Bhagavān Mahādeva, of immense might, disappeared with his consort and followers.” The community of Sādhakas will understand that this great Pāsupatavrata was according to the Tantra. Besides this, there are many places which closely follow the Tantra. It is needless to mention them all.

Next comes the Mahābhāgavata. It is unnecessary to say that this great Purāṇa follows the Tantra, seeing that it is eternally set on the thousand petals of the lotus, whereon Jagadambā is seated, and that it is that which Bhagavān Vedavyāsa¹ declared to be only another form of Tantra. It is needless to quote any single piece of evidence from the book, for the whole of it, from beginning to end, is evidence.

In the Yoga Śāstra, the philosophy of Patañjali, it is said: “Siddhi is of five kinds—namely, acquired by birth, drugs, Mantra, austerity and ecstasy.² Some are in possession of Siddhi from birth, such as Kapila, Prahlāda, Śuka, and others. Some get it by taking drugs, such as the Ṛṣi Māṇḍavya. Some acquire it by constant japa of the Mantra, such as the successful Sādhakas. Others obtain it by dint of austerities, such as Viśvāmitra and others. Some attain to it by means of ecstasy,³ and such are Yogīs.”

All these five forms of Siddhi are the results of practice in Yoga in former births. In the present life they are simply revealed by the help of such causes as birth, drugs, Mantra, etc. That form of Siddhi which comes from constant repetition of Mantras cannot be acquired without the help of Tantra, the Mantraśāstra. Again, according to the Tantra, it is not the highest, but the second form of Siddhi.

As to the Āyurveda, every good physician knows (as is also not unknown to Sādhakas that all forms of worship directed in connection with the saying of Mantra⁴ over medicines, preparation of metallic drugs of the ash of mercury, and other things, as described in the Āyurveda, follow processes prescribed in the Tantra and employ Tāntrik bijas, Mantras, etc.⁵ We are unable to openly quote all those Bijas, Mantras, etc. Competent inquirers will obtain a mass of evidence by going through this Śāstra.

In Jyotiṣa it is said: “At inauspicious times, such as unclean months, the following acts should not be done: commencement of education,

¹ Who arranged the Vedas, wrote Mahābhārata and the eighteen great Purāṇas.

² Janmaja, Oshadhija, Mantraja, Tapoja and Samādhija.

³ Samādhī.

⁴ Āmantranā.

piercing of the ear-lobes, tonsure, investiture with the sacred thread, marriage, bathing for the first time at a place of pilgrimage, seeing the Anādi-devatā,¹ examination, enjoyment of ease, puraścaraṇa,² and initiation.”³ Had not the Tantra Śāstra been an ever-existent authority, how could puraścaraṇa and dikṣā have been dealt with in it?

Smṛti Agastya Samhitā says: “The Mantra, which Guru gives with satisfaction and a joyous countenance . . . performing these preliminaries and mentioning the time of solar eclipse, it has been said that the Mantra which a person receives from his Guru at that time becomes easily successful⁴ for the Sādhaka.”

In the Mahākapaḷa Pañcarātra we find: “Instruction in Mantra given by Guru at the said Nakṣatra, Tithi, Karaṇa, Yoga, and Vāra,⁵ becomes auspicious to a Sādhaka.”

According to Piṅgalā, “a Mantra, once rightly accomplished, becomes propitious even if it is not practised and worshipped (afterwards).”

In the Mantramuktāvali: “Initiated persons should duly make japa of Mantras and worship Devatās, for no sin or uncleanness touches the initiated who are self-controlled.”

It has been said in the Nārada Samhitā: “Next, we shall provide for pūjā, as prescribed in Āgama,⁷ concerning persons tainted with uncleanness.

Besides this, there is a mass of proof in Brahma Purāṇa, Śiva Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Agni Purāṇa, Āditya Purāṇa, Vāyu Purāṇa, Liṅga Purāṇa, Nandikeśvara Purāṇa, Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, Matsya Purāṇa, Kūrma Purāṇa, Garuḍa Purāṇa, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, Brahmapurāṇa, Matsya Sūkta, Śiva Samhitā, Īśāna Samhitā, Śiva Dharma, Śiva Sūtra, and other Śāstras. Were we to quote the evidence of every book, it would not be possible to find room for them in this small volume. We are, therefore, obliged to refrain from doing so against our will.

Next, it is necessary to inquire in this connection whether there were ever any Sādhakas or Sādhikās⁸ initiated in Tāntrik Mantras, and possessed of Siddhi therein, amongst those who were discoverers, controllers, and founders of Śāstras, or amongst those who were worshipped throughout the world as successive generations of gurus for their practices, study,

¹ Śiva lingam.

² A rite in which mantras are repeated at prescribed manner of times (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ Dikṣā.

⁴ Siddha.

⁵ Star, lunar day, a division of the day (of which there are eleven), conjunction, week day.

⁶ Adhikāra (chapter) on Aśauca (uncleanliness).

⁷ Tantra.

Sādhana, and Siddhi in every Śāstra, or amongst those who descended on earth from the Devīloka and Devaloka,¹ for the establishment of Dharma, the preservation of the human race, and the promulgation of Śāstra. We shall make no reference to the community of Sādhakas coming after them. Those only we shall present here whose names the Śāstras have proclaimed.

The Kulacūḍāmaṇi says: “Manu, Candra, Kubera, Manmatha, Lopāmudrā, Maṇi, Nandi, Sakra, Skanda, Śiva, Krodhabhattāraka. Pañcamī, Durvāsā, Vyāsa, Śūrya, Vaśiṣṭa, Parāśara, Aurva, Vahni, Yama, Nirṛita, Varuṇa, Aniruddha, Bharadvāja, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the Ganapā, the Kulapā, Lakṣmī, Gangā, Sarasvatī, Dhātrī, Śeṣa, Pramatta, Unmatta, Kulabhairava, Kṣetrapāla, Hanumān, Dakṣa, Garuḍa, Kāśyapa, Kutsa, Kunta, Jamadagni, Bhṛgu, Brhaspati, the Chief of the Yadus, Dattātreyā, Yudhiṣṭira, Arjuna, Bhīmasena, Droṇācārya, Vṛṣākapi, Duryodhana, Kuntī, Sītā, Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Draupadī, Ūrvaśī, Tilottamā, Puṣpa-danta, Mahābuddha, Vāla, Kāla, Mandāra, Kailāśa, Kṣīrasindhu, Udadhi, Himavān, Nārada—all these are Vīrasādhakas.² They have been spoken of as great Vīras,³ and by the grace of Mahāvidyā⁴ they have attained Samādhī in their respective lines of action.”

The Jñānārṇava⁵ says: “The said Vidyā⁶ is worshipped by Manu”; and the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Samhitā says: “The above-mentioned Mantra is worshipped by Śūrya,” and “the said Vidyā is worshipped by Agastya,” and as to another Mantra, “The said Vidyā is worshipped by Dūrvāsa.”

In addition to all these, Dattātreyā, Paraśurāma, Viśvāmitra, Rāmacandra, Balarāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Mahākāla Himself, the imperturbable Nārada, Mātanga, and other Bhairavas, Sanatkumāra, Gautama, Kapila, Kātyāyana, and other Ṛṣis, were all initiated in the Mantras of Tantra, and attained Siddhi therein. From the special mention of these persons as initiates it does not follow that the rest were uninitiate. Śāstra has merely mentioned the names of those whom circumstance has made renowned in all the worlds, and of the names mentioned but one small sūtra has been quoted. In one word, it may be said that, amongst those whose names have been mentioned in the Ārya Śāstras, Smṛtis, and Samhitās, those who were uninitiated in the Mantras of the Tantra are very rare.

On hearing that even Mahākāla, imperturbable Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, Rāmacandra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gangā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sītā, Rukmiṇī, and others, were initiated in Tāntrik Mantras, let none think that their greatness was lowered thereby. Their store of greatness is not

¹ Abode of Devī and Devas (heaven).

² That is, Sādhakas following vīrācāra.

³ Here one of the Tāntrik divisions of worshippers.

⁴ The Devī.

so small as yours or mine that it is liable to be dried up at every wind. The addition or subtraction of one or two waves makes very little difference in a greatness which is of endless extent, unfathomable, and solemn, like a vast ocean unruffled by any wind. How can their greatness be lowered unless they worship another?¹ It is because we are talking that we are obliged to use the word "their". But from the spiritual point of view it should be "His". Sādhaka, know it for certain that, under the names of Kālī or Kṛṣṇa, Hari or Hara,² it is Him whom we know—He who, moved by the sweetness of His own play, and with the desire to shed the joy of love and Brahma-bliss upon the hearts of His devotees, saves the universe in five³ forms, though but one Brahman in reality. He is five in one and one in five, and, together with the universe, is one without a second. What other, then, is there whom He can worship? If in any form, in the course of play or in any incarnation, He has worshipped, know that worship to be nothing but the tapasyā of Nara Nārāyaṇa⁴ in the Badarikāśrama,⁵ the pañcatapah of Jagadambā in the Himālaya,⁶ the worship of Govardhana in Brindāvana,⁷ the Kātyāyanī-Vrata,⁸ the love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and worship of Kṛṣṇa-Kālī by Śrī Rādhikā, and the worship of Mahādeva by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, after receiving initiation from Vedavyāsa. He has made obeisance to Himself, and that not in order to worship another, but in order to preach to the world the potency of Mantra, Tapas, and Dharma. Whenever it has become necessary to preach any Śakti to the religious world, He Himself has shown the path by acquiring Siddhi in the Sādhana of that Śakti, worship being but the means to the attainment of Siddhi. He has thus given instruction to all people. Bhagavān appears in the heart of Guru, and Himself gives His own Mantra to the disciple. In this His greatness does not suffer. How can the son learn to make obeisance to his parents unless the parents themselves show it to him? The parents of the world have, therefore, made obeisance to themselves, and so taught the world how to make obeisance to them. As His full Brahmahood is not affected by His

¹ That is, they worship themselves.

² Viṣṇu and Śiva.

³ The pañcadevatā: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Ganeśa, and Sūrya.

⁴ Nara, an ancient ṛṣi, and Nārāyaṇa is Viṣṇu. Both did tapas in the Badarikāśrama (Badarinath) in the Himālaya. Nara subsequently incarnated as Arjuna, and Nārāyaṇa as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, at the end of Dvāpara Yuga.

⁵ See last note.

⁶ Gaurī performed the pañcatapah (five penances to secure Śiva as Her husband).

⁷ Śrī Kṛṣṇa worshipped the mountain Govardhana.

⁸ Vrata which Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked the Gopīs (herdswomen) to perform before the Rāsa festival.

appearance as a daughter of the Lord of Mountains as the fruit¹ of Mahādeva's austerities and for the destruction of the demon² Tāraka, or by his appearance as the son or daughter of Nanda as the fruit of the devotion of the herdswomen³ and for the destruction of Kamsa and others, so neither His sole unity without a second nor His greatness are affected by His initiation in Tāntrik Mantras and the attainment of Siddhi in worships prescribed in the Tantra, done to show to the world the potency of Mantra.

It is needless to point out that Dattātreyā, Gautama, Sanatkumāra, Kapila, Nārada, and other Ṛṣis were Tāntriks. Works such as the Dattātreyā Samhitā, Gotama Tantra, Sanatkumāra Tantra, Kapila Pañcarātra, Nārada Pañcarātra, and others, are obvious proofs of it. Probably there is no Sādhaka who does not know of the great Ṛṣi Kātyāyana. Drawn by the intensity of his devotion, Devī Herself assumed the form of a girl, full of youth, and appeared at the root of a bael tree on the sixth evening after the new moon, in the month of Āśvina, for the destruction of the Demon² Mahiṣa. Since then the Victrix of Mahiṣa has been worshipped in autumn⁴ under the name of Kātyāyanī or daughter of Kātyāyana. It is this Ṛṣi Kātyāyana who is the author of the Gṛhya⁵ of the Yajur Veda.

THE DIRECT AND SUPERIOR POWER OF TANTRA

It seems the result of some great sin even to harbour the thought that upon the favourable or unfavourable opinion of other Śāstras the authority of that Tantra depends which keeps living and safe in the shadow of its mighty arms all things moving and unmoving in the universe and world of Sādhana from the creation of the First Self⁶ to the great dissolution.⁷ Authors of Smṛti, Samhitās, Purāṇas, and Darśanas, have, even after the practice for ages of severe austerities, failed to discover Her, and, prostrating themselves to the earth in obeisance, have said: "O Thou whose guṇas⁸ are unknown to all Nigamas,⁹ how can we, O Mother, describe that beauty of Thine which is visible only to Paramaśiva ?" ¹⁰

Again, it has been said: "O Mother, Creatrix of all! who else is able and will dare to describe the greatness of Thy guṇas, which even Brahmā, the Lord of creation,¹¹ with his four mouths; the victor of Tripura, with his

¹ Siddhi.

² Asura.

³ The gopīs, who loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

⁴ Śarat, the months of Bhādra and Āśvina.

⁵ Gṛhya, or household sūtras of that Veda.

⁶ Puruṣa or Ego.

⁷ Mahāpralaya.

⁸ Qualities, functions.

five mouths;¹ Kārtikeya, commander of the celestial armies, with his six mouths;² and Anantadeva, the Lord of serpents, with his thousand mouths,³ are unable to describe?"

Puṣpadanta has said: "If Sarasvatī herself were to write for unending ages with a pen made from an indestructible branch of the Kalpa-tree,⁴ with ink in volume equal to that of the Black Mountain contained in the ocean as its pot, upon the wide surface of the earth as writing-paper, even then She would fail to record Thy guṇas."

It is a dangerous learning which to-day makes a man, in order to prove the authority of Tantra Śāstra, the word of Śiva Śakti (who is beyond the mind and speech of this world, Whose merciful regard the three worlds supplicate, whose meanest servants, the Yogīs, Ṛṣis, Munis, Siddhas, Sādhus, and Sādhakas,⁵ are honoured throughout the world), depend on the words of the self-same Ṛṣis.

Learned man! lay aside this learning of yours, and be not ashamed for having done so. If any have come to this world with a perverse intellect, you undoubtedly are their chief. Disputes, questionings, doubts, and misgivings on this subject arise in your and my minds. But in none of the Śāstras do we find those who are to remove our doubts themselves raising a whisper against Tantra. Nowhere therein do we find it questioned whether the Tantra Śāstra is authoritative or not. You will say that perhaps they had not such an all-embracing vision as we have got. But there is no "perhaps" in the matter. Such scepticism was not in their nature. You and I, though born of Brāhmaṇa parents, are to-day behaving like Caṇḍālas⁶ through bad companionship. And so we consider it derogatory to our honour to bow our heads at the feet of our parents. But they were sons of Brāhmaṇas, and Brāhmaṇas themselves, and thus the sceptical question suitable only to a Caṇḍāla's nature never found a place in their minds. Where there is no question, how can there be an answer?

Just as people fearlessly enter the palace of their King at the time of payment of their yearly taxes, and seek his protection when unavoidable danger appears, so, whenever any unavoidable difficulty has arisen in

¹ Śiva called Tripurārī from his victory over the Demon Tripura, or as some say, the three cities of the Asuras.

² Son of Śiva.

³ Who, from under the nether worlds (pātāla), supports the universe on his head (see Viṣṇu Purāṇa ii, chap. 5).

⁴ The heavenly tree, which granted all desire as its fruit.

⁵ Adepts in Yoga, Seers, sages, the perfected (siddha), holy men, and religious men who practise Sādhana.

matters of worship or any ādhyātmik, ādhibhautik, or ādhidaivik danger¹ has arisen, all Śāstras have stood at the door of Tantra and given instructions in its name for man's safety. And at other times, whenever there has been occasion to describe practices,² rules of caste,³ history, and the like, they have timidly assumed silence, considering the saying of Tantra to be as weighty and solemn as royal messages, and beyond penetration on their part. Consequently, they do not launch into a discussion upon Tantra at every word. This is not due to want of faith, but bespeaks perfect reverence on their part.

It is in Bengal alone that we hear people, now here, now there, raising the grating cry of "Tantra, Tantra!". But in other provinces, such as Mahārāṣṭra,⁴ Drāvida,⁵ Utkala,⁶ Kāṣmīra, and Nepāla, people do not call that Śāstra, Tantra, but Mantra Śāstra, just as people do not take the name of their fathers, but call them "Father". The meaning of this is that worship of Īśvara⁷ is every person's daily duty, and that Mantra is essentially necessary for worship. If Mantra be necessary, then one must necessarily ask the help of a Mantra Śāstra. If, in spite of such eternally valid evidence as the words of Śāstra, lives of Ṛṣis, immemorial practice, anyone still says "Unauthoritative" to such we, as followers of the Śāstra, will reply: "The Vedas, Smṛti and words inspired by the spirit of Dharma are authority, and if to any person all this is of no authority, then who will accept his words as authority?"

Such evidence is sufficient to prove the acquiescence of the Śāstras, but the acquiescence which is required by polemics is different.

In anticipation of danger from doubt, which is the characteristic of the Kali age, the great Ordainer has made adequate provision against it. Other Śāstras have repeatedly and clearly said: "The doubt of a person without faith is no example"—that is, should an unbeliever do any work ordained of Śāstra, and yet derive no benefit from it, then his case does not stand for an example, "because everywhere it is only a believer who is competent⁸ for the performance of Vaidik rites." Whatever may be the reason, the Śāstra will only bear fruit for those who have faith in it. The matter is, however, otherwise with Tantra. For I cannot disbelieve it even though I be the greatest and most obdurate of sceptics. I may not have faith in Veda or Śāstra, in God, the next world, sin and righteousness, Heaven and Hell, yet I cannot but believe in Tantra.

Of the three forms of evidence⁹—namely, perception, inference, and Śāstra¹⁰—the sceptic¹¹ may not have faith in inference and Śāstra, but he

¹ See *post*.

² Ācāra.

³ Varṇadharma

⁴ Mahrāṭṭa country.

⁵ Dravidian country—Madras.

⁶ Orissa.

⁷ The "personal" God.

⁸ Adhikāra.

⁹ Pramāṇa.

¹⁰ That is, pratyakṣam, anumānam, Śabda.

yields to and accepts direct perception as the only true form of evidence. And thus, even though I be the greatest sceptic, I cannot ignore Tantra, which is a Pratyakṣa Śāstra¹: "The potency of a thing does not wait upon intellectual recognition." Whether you believe it or not, medicine has power, and will cure disease. It does not wait upon your intellectual recognition of the fact. There is an inherent power in fire to burn. It will burn the hand which is knowingly or unknowingly put into it without waiting for the belief or unbelief of the owner of that hand or anyone else. Similarly Siddhi, the visible² fruit of the Tantra Śāstra, is the outcome of its natural potency. Whether you or I believe it or not, Tantra Śāstra will, when applied as directed by itself, bear visible² fruit. The combined determination of lakhs of persons such as you or I will not avail to prevent that. Relying on the strength of its own arms, Tantra does not recognize the efficacy of anything, call it reasoning or evidence, judgment or inference. All Śāstras, in making ordinances in conformity with Tantra, have guarded their individual honour. For as it would matter little to the sea if all the waves were to become cross and to turn their currents away from it, so it would matter little to the Tantra even if all other Śāstras were to go against it.

You may rush towards a lion with marshalled herds of furious elephants, but at the moment the resounding roar is heard of the maned King of Beasts, subduing even the loudest voices, then everyone will fly, one knows not whither. Similarly, place all Śāstras on one side and Tantra on the other, and then you will see that the directly perceptible² war cry of Mantras, resounding like the solemn booming of thunderclouds, will make them senseless, and disperse and drive them away to places of which there is no knowing. It is because of this eternally self-evident² superhuman virtue of the power of Mantra that the Tantra and the Devatā worshipped therein are eternally awake. Who will with impunity throw weapons of crooked and fallacious argument at one whose voice is guided by the Devatā, who directs all intellects in the Brahmāṇḍa, and who dwells in every heart? The fancies of inference³ are ever trampled under foot by direct perception.² Tantra has therefore said: "Kulaśāstra⁴ is eternal evidence, because it bears visible² fruit. Putting aside the sceptics, even such animals as beasts, birds, and the like, admit visible² things to be evidence. It is by force of the realization of such evident² fruit that Tantra has destroyed all perverse arguers. Who knows what will happen in the hereafter?⁵ That is the best of all philosophies⁶ which bears actual and visible² fruit in this world." This is what Śāstra says.

¹ A practical Śāstra of experience.

³ Anumānam.

² Pratyakṣa.

⁴ Tantra.

When, however, in society it is found that on many occasions Tāntrik rites bear no fruit, doubt arises in the people's mind. We ourselves are much pleased to see and hear all this. For where they complain of a want of fruits we do not discern it. Is it not a fruit if Svastyāyana¹ leads to dire consequences? Through our ill-fortune a mango-tree bears āṃḍā,² or through lack of intelligence we wish an āṃḍah-tree to bear mangoes. This it is which gives rise to the difficulty about fruit. Your and my belief that "we do a work according to the Śāstra" is really a wicked vanity on our part. And it is because Śāstra and Devatā are unable to bear with this insolence of ours that they shatter our conceit in giving us fruit the opposite of what we sought. And then we think "alas! what has happened? faith is shaken!" but if we understand the matter rightly it is only a wrong belief which is dissipated. Neither place, time, nor subject is according to faith, yet still there is the meaningless and unreasoning cry, "according to Śāstra".³ Why should Śāstra tolerate this wrong? Śāstra ordains that a pūjā is to be held at dead of night. But maybe, either from fear of keeping up at night or attracted by the mahāprasāda,⁴ you sit in worship in the early evening. Why then should not what is begun in early evening end in misfortune? For this reason Śāstra has said: "Who does not worship Mahāvidyā,⁵ or repeat Mantras." It is only for want of one thing—namely, the proper disposition⁶—that there occurs a want of fruit. It is a very difficult thing to worship Her with a heart inspired with true feeling for Her. Rāmaprasāda has therefore said: She is to be sought through feeling. Can we without feeling find Her?"

In fact, it is great foolishness to doubt Mantra or Devatā on account of one's own deficiencies. It bespeaks great stupidity to put out a fire by pouring water on it, and then to opine that it has not the power to burn. Similarly, it is a heinous sin to misdo Tāntrik work and then to doubt Śāstra. It is always the mark of a weak, feminine nature to endeavour to establish one's superiority on the issue of a verbal quarrel, whereas it is the sign of a man to desire to conquer the world by the strength of one's own arms. Similarly reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Śāstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine⁷ events by the force of its own Mantras. The power to destroy, to banish, and control,⁸ are, with others, matters of daily accomplishment.

¹ A rite to dispel evil and to bring about good.

² A sour, skinny fruit.

³ That is, everyone nowadays is speaking of Śāstra, but none really cares for or applies it.

⁴ The great food or flesh of the animal of sacrifice.

⁵ The Devī.

⁶ Bhāva.

Thousands of great and accomplished Sādhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.¹ In every Indian cremation ground² the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavis³ is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged⁴ near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sādhakas' Mantras, and made to render aid to Sādhana and Siddhi. Tāntrik Yogīs even now and in this world obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the world of Devas, which lies beyond our senses. She, with dishevelled hair, the Dispeller of fear from the hearts of those who worship Her, still appears in great cremation grounds,⁵ to give liberation to Her devoted Sādhakas, who, fearful of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sādhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman, laying their Brahmārandhra⁶ at those lotus feet of Brahmamayī,⁷ which are adored by Brahmā and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain⁸ is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sādhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation. Maybe there is nothing but darkness for the bedridden and dying blind man. Yet know that of a surety, oh blind man, that the darkness exists only in your eyes.

We are obliged to say something else. In Bengal a species of high-class creatures called "educated critics" has come into existence, who at every word are wont to say: "The Tantra Śāstra is a recent production. The age of the earth is 5,000 years in all. Within this period the creation of man dates back 3,000 years. Previous to that his forbears were, according to some, frogs, and according to others, monkeys." Whose antiquarian researches have led to such discoveries? It is no wonder that they should deem the Tantra Śāstra a recent thing. We, too, cannot oppose or be sceptical of their views. Even if we think we shall not believe it, our intellect believes of itself. For had not such

¹ Tapas.

² Smaśāna, where Śavāsana, Muṇḍāsana, Latāsādhana, and other Tāntrik rites are practised.

³ Adept Tāntrik men and women.

⁴ Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.

⁵ Mahāsmāśānas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tāntrik Sādhana are practised. The auspicious Kālikā is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachikurā), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpūrādi stotra, verses 3, 10).

⁶ The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally.

been the state of their forbears, why should the descendants be such as they are? Alas! O Providence,¹ we know not whether you ever dreamt of such a perversion of intellect, of such a disastrous change of nature in the children of Manu. Be the idea sound or superstitious, we still say: "From the time that the Devas were established in the seven heavens,² on the summit of Mount Sumeru, from that time we Brāhmaṇas have belonged to the race of Brahmā. So long as Gangā³ endures on earth, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmā. So long as the sun and moon shine in the sky, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmā." In Śāstra alone does a Brāhmaṇa live, so that the existence of Brāhmaṇas and Śāstras are one and the same thing. Judging from the point of view of those for whom the creation of man is 3,000 years old, Tantra will be a recent creation of, say, a 100 years' age. Intelligent men must therefore now consider that within these 100 years only, in the midst of four or five revolutions caused by minor forms of Dharma,⁴ in the course of contest with sceptics, the Tāntrik Śāstra and initiation have been promulgated and preached through heaven,⁵ the mortal world,⁶ and the nether world,⁷ to the ears of every man and woman of every home in Bhāratavarṣa, consisting of Cīna, great Cīna,⁸ Nepāla, Kāśmīra, the Dravidian Land,⁹ Mahārāṣṭra,¹⁰ Aṅga,¹¹ Baṅga,¹² Kālīṅga,¹³ Saurāṣṭra,¹⁴ Magadha,¹⁵ Pāñcāla,¹⁶ Utkala,¹⁷ and other countries and continents beginning from the mount of sunrise to the mount of sunset.¹⁸ What blessed criticism! ¹⁹ It is on this account that old far-sighted grammarians gave the prefix "sam" instead of any other to samālocanā ²⁰ (criticism). Historical critic, what shall we say to you? Valihari! ²¹

There is yet another sad thing to tell. In the community of worshippers there are a few persons belonging to the Vaiṣṇava sect ²² who believe

¹ Vidhātā.

² Svarga.

³ The holy River Ganges.

⁴ Upadharma, used in a bad sense.

⁵ Svarga. ⁶ Martya.

⁷ Rasātala.

⁸ Mahācīna.

⁹ Madras country.

¹⁰ Mahrāṭṭa country.

¹¹ Country about Bhagalpur, Tirhut.

¹² Bengal.

¹³ Part of Orissa described in the Tantras as from Pūri to the Kṛṣṇa River.

¹⁴ Surat.

¹⁵ Southern portion of Behar.

¹⁶ Punjab.

¹⁷ Orissa.

¹⁸ Udayācala and Astācala: the mountains from which the sun is said to rise, and on which it sets, respectively.

¹⁹ Samālocanā.

²⁰ A pun; the word "sam" in Bengali meaning "a clown."

²¹ A form of exclamation which literally means "I am beaten. I have no words for it. Astounding."

that the Tantra is the Śāstra dealing with the worship¹ of Śaivas² and Śāktas³ alone, and that it is in thorough antagonism to the Vaiṣṇava Dharma. We do not know what to say in reply to this. To those who hold such a belief we with folded hands put the question: "What Tantra is this?" The name of the Tantra of which they have heard from their Lords⁴ is Svatantra,⁵ while that which is Śāstra is called Tantra. When dealing with the subject of the characteristics of Tantra, it has been said that it is that which is "approved of by Vāsudeva".⁶ In this there is nothing to which a true Vaiṣṇava can take exception. But then we have nothing to say to those with whom the objection lies, because they are Lords.⁷ When they interpret the Śāstra of Devotion,⁸ it seems that they are Lords of Vaiṣṇavas alone; but when they sit in judgment disproving Tantra, it would seem that they are Lords of Viṣṇu also; otherwise, how can they dare to disprove the words of their Lord?⁹ If the Tantra Śāstra is hostile to Vaiṣṇavas, we then ask by whose grace did they receive that Viṣṇu Mantra, initiated in which they, in their pride of Vaiṣṇavism, cast sinister glances at the Tantra Śāstra? It is, indeed, a sign of great scepticism to be an enemy of Tantra after initiation in a Tāntrik Mantra. We know that honest Vaiṣṇava Sādhakas are never inimical to Tantra. But still, for those who are so mistaken, it is necessary to point out what the Tantra itself has to say in this respect.

Tantra says: "Kālī alone in the Kali age, Kṛṣṇa alone in the Kali age, Gopāla and Kālikā¹⁰ in the Kali age, are the Devatās who are awake."¹¹

"Mahākālī and Mahākāla exist in the manner of a grain of gram. Just as the grain of gram has on the outside a covering, and is in the inside divided into two equal portions closely touching each other, so the Parabrahman¹² is covered on the outside by Māyā, and exists interiorly as Śiva and Śakti in equal parts closely united the one to the other. It is

¹ Upāsana Śāstra.

² Worshippers of Śiva.

³ Worshippers of the Goddess, or of Śakti the Devī.

⁴ Prabhu, the title by which the gosvāmīs, or religious preceptors of Vaiṣṇavas, are called by their disciples.

⁵ Svatantra means "different". There is a play on the words, the meaning of the passage being that Tantra is Śāstra, but what they have heard is different, that is not Śāstra.

⁶ Viṣṇu, Lord of Vaiṣṇavas (see *post.*).

⁷ Prabhu, the title referred in footnote 4 above.

⁸ Bhaktiśāstra.

⁹ Viṣṇu, by whom the Tantra is approved (see *post.*).

¹⁰ Kṛṣṇa and Kālī.

¹¹ That is, active; whose activities are efficacious.

¹² Parabrahman.

this Paramātmā existing in the forms of Śiva and Śakti who is Mahārudra, Mahāviṣṇu, and Mahābrahmā. The one only Brahman is called and differentiated by the three names Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara.¹ But he who looks upon the different forms which pass under these different names as really different never attains liberation.”²

In the Muṇḍamālā Tantra³ it is said: “So long, O Supreme Devī, as it is thought that there is a different Spirit in different beings,⁴ so long only is the world multiform, activities different, and feeling diverse; Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara distinct; Gaṇeśa, Dineśa,⁵ Vahni,⁶ Varuṇa,⁷ Kubera,⁸ and the Dikpālas⁹ different Devas; effort is of many kinds; beings are masculine, feminine, and neuter; bael leaves¹⁰ are different from tulsi leaves,¹¹ Javā, Droṇa, and Aparājītā¹² are different from Tulsi-leaves; the Divya, Vīra, and Paśu forms of worship are different,¹³ the idea of difference exists in Tantra; different forms of worship are prescribed for different Devatās; and so long (O Mother of the world) is Hari¹⁴ deemed separate from Hara,¹ and so long (O Śivā)¹⁵ are Kālī with the terrible jaws, She¹⁶ with the beautiful matted hair,¹⁷ Śoḍaśī and Bhairavī,¹⁸ different Devīs; Bhuvaneśvarī, Cinnamastā, Annapūrṇā, Bagalomukhī, Mātangī, and Kamalātmikā¹⁹ are different Devīs, and Sarasvatī and Rādhikā²⁰ are distinct. As long as the notion of unity at the lotus feet of Bhavānī²¹ does not exist, so long endeavours, activities, modes of worship, and practice are different, O Devī of fair body! O Śaṅkarī!²² when perception of the truth²³ grows in the lake of the Sādhaka's pure heart, then in the resplendent bloom of the flower of non-duality, which is the lotus feet of Tāriṇī,²⁴ the vision of one only Brahman, not only in all Devas and Devīs, but in every being²⁵ in the Samsāra, opens to the view of the Sādhaka.”

¹ Śiva.

² Such as he who worships Viṣṇu, thinking him to be different from
Śiva. ³ Chap. vi. ⁴ Jīva. ⁵ The Sun.

⁶ The Lord of Fire. ⁷ Lord of water. ⁸ Lord of wealth.

⁹ The regents of the ten quarters. ¹⁰ Sacred to Śiva.

¹¹ The holy basil (ocymum sanctum), sacred to Viṣṇu.

¹² The hibiscus, drona (a white flower) and clitoria—flowers sacred to the
Devī.

¹³ The three different forms of Tāntrik worship (Upāsana).

¹⁴ Viṣṇu. ¹⁵ A title of the Devī.

¹⁶ Tārā, one of the Daśamahāvidyā, or ten great forms of the Devī.

¹⁷ Jaṭā. ¹⁸ Forms of the Devī. ¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Sarasvatī is Devī of speech, and Rādhikā the beloved of Kṛṣṇa.

²¹ Title of the Devī; Bhava is Śiva. The Devī and Vāyu Purāṇas say that
the Devī is Bhavānī, as giving life to Bhāva.

²² Śaṅkarī is feminine of Śaṅkara, a title of Śiva.

“The Sādhaka who contemplates Maheśvarī,¹ knowing that She is not different from Guru,² Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and Mantra, is undoubtedly Maheśvara³ Himself, even though he be a Jīva.”⁴

To say that the Śāstra in which such a universally accepted conclusion is the object of Sādhana and Siddhi, is yet antagonistic to Vaiṣṇavas, though it does not harm Tantra, yet smears the spotless Vaiṣṇava name with the mud of indelible infamy.

To bring about harmony in place of their quarrels, Puṣpadanta has said in the Mahimnāstava:⁵ “All the conflict of opinion which exists in the threefold Śāstra,⁶ Sāṅkhya,⁷ Yoga, cult of Paśupati,⁸ and Vaiṣṇava Śāstra,⁹ is due to differences of ideas, and is nothing but the doubt whether this or that is the right path. But, O Lord! just as the waters of all rivers, in whatever direction they flow, and whether in straight or sinuous course, mingle in the end in one great ocean, so Śādhakas (whatever be the path they follow) are at their journey’s close sure to meet each other in Thee Who art the one only ocean of Unity.”

Sādhaka, know it for certain that that is the final conclusion of every Śāstra, be it Veda or Tantra.

There are present-day Vaiṣṇavas who revel in daily new emotions,¹⁰ who are not satisfied with the forms¹¹ of the ten incarnations¹² of Bhagavān, or the four armed Nārāyaṇa Vāsudeva dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha,¹³ nor even¹⁴ with the conjoined¹⁵ form of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the perfect incarnation, and who in many instances abandon the Caitanyaless¹⁶ Mantra of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa worshipped by their forefathers, and received by them at the time of initiation, and get initiated in a Mantra which has Caitanya in it.¹⁷ Amongst such people there are many who say that it were better if

¹ Title of Devī, as spouse of Śiva, Maheśvara.

² Religious preceptor.

³ Śiva.

⁴ An embodied spirit; here, “man”.

⁵ Hymn in praise of the greatness of Śiva.

⁶ Trayī—the Veda. So called because it consists of the three things—song, prose, and verse; or because the first three Vedas are alone included.

⁷ Philosophical school.

⁸ The Tantra.

⁹ Śāstras dealing with the cult of Viṣṇu.

¹⁰ Rasa.

¹¹ Mūrti.

¹² Avatāra of Viṣṇu.

¹³ Viṣṇu’s heaven.

¹⁴ Yugalamūrti, or that in which the persons of both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are shown together.

¹⁵ Pūrṇa avatāra.

¹⁶ See next note.

¹⁷ There is here both pun and sarcasm. Caitanya means consciousness or intelligence, and is also the name of the celebrated Vaiṣṇava Saint who is the head of a large section of the Vaiṣṇavas. The meaning is that some people have the audacity to think that the Mantra of Viṣṇu is without caitanya (acaitanya)—that is, without consciousness—because not associated with the Saint Caitanya and to think that a Mantra associated with the same Caitanya

Tantra Śāstra ceased to exist. They have both the daring and the opportunity to say this because, considering the nature of the daily novel Mantras in which they are initiated, and which are found neither in Veda, Purāṇa, nor Tantra, the existence of the Tantra Śāstra is a source of danger to them. However that may be, it is not necessary to waste time in writing about them. The only refuge of the Hindu race is the tree of Veda, which is manvantaras¹ and kalpāntaras² old. The five forms³ of Tāntrik worship are its five branches.

It is by no means impossible that now, towards the end of the Kali age, a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches. Those, however, who know the original tree will recognize the parasites the moment they see the leaves. However that may be, we do not consider them as included in any of the five communities of worshippers, and are therefore unable to accept their opinion as that of Hindu society. We know them only as Vaiṣṇavas who are initiated according to Śāstra in Viṣṇu Mantras. If they want to destroy the Tantra Śāstra they will simply destroy themselves, because the Viṣṇu Mantras themselves are stated in Tantra alone. To become inimical to Tantra owing to enmity with Śāktas,⁴ caused by difference in practice, is like turning a father out of home because of a quarrel with a brother.

There is another thing of which we are ashamed even to think. We are really pained to see so much anger and enmity in Vaiṣṇavas who worship such an amiable, peaceful, smiling, and sweet-faced Devatā, and who daily eat haviṣya⁵ without flesh. If in this matter they were to ask their Gurus, instead of venting independent opinions of their own, then we, too, shall be saved. If Tantra Śāstra be deemed merely the Śāstra of the Śāktas, then by the grace of what Śāstra have Vaiṣṇavas and the Gosvāmīs of the well-known families of Advaita, Nityānanda, and others, who are Gurus of the Vaiṣṇavas, and who give initiation, preserved their great glory so long? Blinded by anger, people often forget their relation with others, and abuse them, but that is another matter. As a fact, both Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas are equally initiated in Tāntrik Mantras. The authority of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata is held by the Vaiṣṇavas in much higher esteem than that of any other Purāṇa or Tantra. That Śrīmad Bhāgavata⁶ says: "He who would free himself of the bond of the heart

¹ A manvantara is a fourteenth part of a Kalpa (see *post.*).

² A Kalpa, or day of Brahma, is 4,320,000,000 years.

³ Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Śāktas, Sauras, Gāṇapatya.

⁴ Worshippers of Śakti, or the Devī.

⁵ A very pure form of food, prepared with fruit, vegetable, and rice.

should worship Bhagavān in the manner prescribed in Tantra.” Again, after referring to the forms of worship prescribed in both Veda and Tantra, it refers separately to the Tāntrik form of worship for the Kali age, and says: “Hear also how worship is to be performed in the Kali age according to the ordinance of various Tantras.”

Commenting on this verse Śrīdharasvāmī says: “By a separate reference again the superiority of the Tāntrik path in the Kali age is shown.”

In the same work Bhagavān counselled Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, as to what should be done in His own worship. “In all parvas¹ in the year provision should be made for Jātrās² and Valis³ in my honour. Vaidik initiation⁴ and Tāntrik initiation should be received successively, and the Cāturmāsyā,⁵ Ekādaśī,⁶ and other Vratas⁷ should be observed.” Again, “All articles of Pūjā, such as water for washing the feet,⁸ for sipping,⁹ and the others,¹⁰ should be set out in order. Marking out a seat for me with Dharma and other Śaktis, nine in all, make therein a lotus of eight petals bright with the pollen of its womb. Then worship me with Mantras prescribed in both the Veda and Tantra Śāstras for the attainment of siddhi in both.” Here Śrīdharasvāmī has in his Commentary laid down that worship, according to both Veda and Tantra, is requisite for the acquisition of both enjoyment¹¹ and liberation,¹² as stated in both Veda and Tantra. “Worship of me is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (that is, Vaidik and Tāntrik and mixed, or Paurāṇik). I should be duly adored according to all the three forms.”¹³ “If the Sādhaka adores me by the Vaidik and Tāntrik paths of Kriyayoga,¹⁴ he will receive from me siddhi in both Veda and Tantra.”

¹ Auspicious tithis (or lunar days) for religious observances.

² Festivals in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, such as Rathajātrā, Dola-jātrā, Snāna-jātrā.

³ Worship (pūjā) with offerings.

⁴ Dīkṣā.

⁵ Four monthly.

⁶ On the eleventh lunar day after new or full moon.

⁷ Occasional and voluntary religious observances.

⁸ Pādyam.

⁹ Ācāmanam.

¹⁰ That is, the other (ordinarily fourteen) upacāras.

¹¹ Bhoga.

¹² Mokṣa.

¹³ The author's Bengali translation appears here to differ somewhat from the Sanskrit, which runs: “Trayāṇāṃ pīṣitenaiva vedhinā mām samarchchayet,” or “I should be adored by whichever of the three forms it is desired.”

We ask those who have faith in Bhagavān and the Bhāgavata whether they have faith in these commands of Bhagavān, as stated in the Bhāgavata. Now the Sādhaka, who stands arbitrator in the dispute, will see whether the Tāntrik initiation and Scripture do not form the very life's stay for the Vaiṣṇava who follows Śāstra. When the time for the dissolution of a family comes, we find that both inmates and outsiders become of the same mind, and so through the misfortune of the present Āryan society we find that in many cases to be so.

CHAPTER IV

GĀYATRĪ MANTRA¹ AND IMAGE WORSHIP²

ALTHOUGH all admit that the Gāyatrī is the fundamental part³ of worship as directed in Śāstra, yet the characteristics of the present time make it necessary to consider it both in some degree separately, and also in connection with Tantra. For there are nowadays some who even ask: "What is the necessity for the adoption of Tāntrik Mantras when there is the Vaidik Gāyatrī?" The reply is that there is no necessity if necessity for initiation ends with initiation; but those who, on the contrary, have to perform worship based on initiation must certainly be reinitiated according to the Tantra. For in the Kali age worship of Gāyatrī is not possible according to the Vaidik method. Without reinitiation in Tāntrik Mantra, worship of the Gāyatrī even cannot be considered to be accomplished. Should anyone on that account regret because he thinks the Gāyatrī is disgraced thereby then Gāyatrī Herself⁴ will judge the matter. But there is no cause for lament. There is no fear that the line will fail even if the son should feel himself insulted and therefore die, when the grandson is taken in the arms. It is asked, what is the necessity? But we ask, where is even the want of it. Who will say that the boy who has passed the matriculation examination will not in time be eligible for studies suitable for a degree examination? However that may be, more of this hereafter. At present let us discuss what Gāyatrī is according to Āryan notions. Is the Gāyatrī mere words or Mantra? If it be merely the former, how can it be so supreme as to be accepted as the fundamental part⁵ of worship, the supreme Brahman Himself? If the glory of Gāyatrī is due merely to its being a great saying, weighty and solemn, pure, full of sense and truth, then there are hundreds of thousands of great sayings in the Āryan Śāstras

¹ Gāyatrītattva. The Gāyatrī, the famous Mantra, is the essential tattva of Vedas: "Om, let us contemplate upon the wonderful spirit of the Divine Creator of the terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial regions. May he direct our minds (towards the acquisition of Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa)."

² Sākāra upāsana.

³ Tattva.

⁴ For the Mantra is the Devī Herself.

which are equally replete with truth, and marked with more feeling and sweetness. Why, instead of worshipping them, do we worship Gāyatrī alone as the essential portion¹ of all the Vedas? Why am I, whether learned or ignorant, with or without understanding, called a Brāhmaṇa provided I am initiated according to Śāstra in the Gāyatrī Mantra? Putting aside the world, why has the Lord of it said: "Every Brāhmaṇa is my body, be he learned or unlearned." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Śrī Bhagavān has said: "Even this four-armed form² dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha is not dearer to me than a Brāhmaṇa. A Brāhmaṇa is full of all Vedas, and I, too, am full of all Devās." That is to say, the world is maintained by both Veda and Devatā, and both are therefore equally worshipful. But as all Vedas and myself who are full of all Devas, unite in the Brahman body of a Brāhmaṇa, the latter is the most worshipful of all.³ "Malicious and misguided men who know not this truth slight me who am the all-pervading Supreme Spirit, the Guru of the three worlds, and Brāhmaṇa in form, by worshipping my images and symbols only" (that is to say, by omitting to worship a Brāhmaṇa as Bhagavān). Manu says: "On the birth of a Brāhmaṇa, Īśvara Himself⁴ is born on earth in order to guard the sheath of Dharma of all creations." For him who neglects the Gāyatrī, Śāstra again says in the Gāyatrī Tantra: "It is the embodied spirit of a twice-born person formed of Gāyatrī who is the worshipper of Devatā, and not the body nor senses, nor anything else. Viṣṇu, Śiva and other Devatās are fit objects of worship for him only who is such a Devatā. A Brāhmaṇa who neglects the Gāyatrī should not touch tulsi leaves nor take the name of Hari. A twice-born who neglects the Gāyatrī is like the lowest Caṇḍāla. What will he gain by worshipping Śrī-Kṛṣṇa? If through ill-fortune a miscreant who forsakes Mantra, Guru and Deva is born in one's family, he as well as all his kith and kin of the same gotra⁵ should do expiation for it. An effigy made of fifty kuśa leaves should be burnt according to the rules prescribed in Veda. Otherwise his sin will soon enter into all his relatives of the same gotra, and such as come in contact with him will share in his guilt. In the Kali age the number of such sinners will daily and particularly increase." Again in the same Tantra it is said: "The twice-born who through wilfulness or neglect omits to do japa⁶ of the Gāyatrī is of a surety born of the seed of a Yavana.⁷ The Brāhmaṇa who is without faith in even the Gāyatrī is, O Devī, truly a Yavana, and being such how can he repeat the Gāyatrī? Fallen is the country in which that sinful Yavana dwells, and fallen also is the Ruler of that country. Brāhmaṇas who associate with him are fallen and infamous.

¹ Tattva or principle.

² Mūrti.

³ A Brāhmaṇa is called "earth-deva," (Bhūdeva).

⁴ The Lord.

⁵ Lineage.

Food given by a person who neglects the Gāyatrī is worse even than food given by a Yavana. It were better to partake of the food of a Yavana than even to drink water brought by a sinner who neglects the Gāyatrī."

Why? Why is it that the influence of a few words makes a man worthy of adoration by Devatās? And again, why is it that the want of those few words makes him the lowest Caṇḍāla, lower than a Yavana?¹ The Śāstra has neither enmity nor friendship with Jīva. It rebukes none and caresses none. It says only what is true. If anyone's feelings are wounded on account of the statement of a truth, then not he who utters that truth but the truth itself must be considered the cause, and therefore inquiry should be made into that. The truth about Jīva will be revealed if the true principles² concerning Gāyatrī, according to Śāstra, are discovered. In fact, it is because we do not know the true nature³ of Gāyatrī that we hear of all these "why's". The moment we realize the true aspect of Gāyatrī then no "why" will remain. Then we shall understand that there can never be distrust in Gāyatrī unless a Brāhmaṇa's nature becomes fundamentally corrupt, and that in such a case the epithets of Caṇḍāla and Yavana are not exaggerated, but merely appropriate expressions. The authors of Śāstra knew at least as well as you or I that it is of little moment whether a few words are said or not. You or I have not done well in thinking that the Gāyatrī, which even a muni,⁴ who has taken a vow of silence, may not omit to inwardly repeat without ceasing to be a twice-born, is mere language and words. It should be understood that that which makes a Brāhmaṇa by its presence and a Yavana by its absence is not mere language, but the great supersensual Mantrasakti⁵ which controls the Brahmāṇḍa, and appears as eternal consciousness; and that what we have taken for mere words and feet of verse is not so, but a great Mantra, full of brilliance appearing in the form of characters replete with transcendent principles.⁶ A firestick⁷ may be only an ordinary piece of wood to a Śavara⁸ gathering fuel in the forest, but to the performer of sacrifice with the fire it is a veritable womb which bears luminous fire. Similarly the Gāyatrī may appear only a string of letters to an unbeliever, but to a Sādhaka of divine wisdom it is a very mass of radiant shining energy⁹ of Mantra. Just as when, sitting even in a dark room, the sacrificer lights the sacrificial fire by the friction of fire-sticks,

¹ Foreigner.

² Gāyatrī Tattva, or the nature of or principles concerning Gāyatrī. In a general way Gāyatrī Tattva means the subject of Gāyatrī.

³ Sage or saint.

⁴ Mantra power.

⁵ Gāyatrī Tattva, or the nature of or principles concerning Gāyatrī. In a general way Gāyatrī Tattva means the subject of Gāyatrī.

and by casting the offerings in that fire offers full oblation¹ in homa,² so the sādḥaka living in the deep dark samsāra illumines the cave of his heart with the light of Brahman,³ kindled by the friction of mind and Mantra. He then offers to that burning fire of the Parabrahman in the fire-pit of consciousness⁴ existing as mind engirdled with the three guṇas, all the three forms of action done in waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, whether sāttvik, rājasik, or tāmasik,⁵ and whether by mind, speech, or action, and lives in a state of constant and perfect liberation.

The effect of mere language is to produce ideas of skill and emotions and sweetness, whilst that of Mantra is to stimulate the mental faculties with the divine radiant energy,⁶ and to thus lead to a full understanding of constantly visible supersensual realities.⁷ A mere collection of words is something gross, whilst Mantra is full of consciousness. A word is a mere display of letters, whilst Mantra is a mass of radiant energy. Sayings give advice to men of the world, whilst Mantras awaken⁸ superhuman Śakti. A mere saying is, therefore, like a Jīva, subject to birth and death; whilst a Mantra is Brahman Himself, unwasting, undecaying. So long as there is a difference between gross matter and consciousness, between Jīva and Brahman, so long will there exist this difference between a saying and a Mantra—a difference as wide as that between the heaven and the nether world. This is why, as regards the Gāyatrī, the notion that sayings and Mantra are identical is a false and mistaken idea. In order to guard ourselves against it, we must first understand the word-meaning of Mantra, and then proceed to deal with Mantra Śakti.⁹ In the Gāyatrī Tantra it is said: “That is called Mantra by the meditation¹⁰ upon which Jīva acquires freedom from sin, enjoyment of heaven, and liberation,¹¹ and by the aid of which he attains in full the fourfold fruit.”¹² Again: “Because She is sung (gītā) in meditation from Mūlādhāra¹³ to Brahmārandhra¹⁴—that is to say, She enjoying the music of the lute,¹⁵ ever resides as the Mother, consisting of the fifty letters in the regions which extend from the four-petalled to the thousand-petalled lotus¹⁶—therefore is She *gāyat*,¹⁷ and because, if meditated upon, She gives liberation

¹ Āhuti. ² The sacrifice into fire. ³ Brahmatejas. ⁴ Caitanya.

⁵ That is, possessing the characteristics of the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas. ⁶ Tejas.

⁷ Tattvas. ⁸ Literally, make to shine.

⁹ Power of Mantra. ¹⁰ Manana. ¹¹ Mokṣa.

¹² That is, dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa.

¹³ The lowest Cakra in the perineal region.

¹⁴ The cavity of Brahman on the crown of the head. ¹⁵ Viṇā.

¹⁶ That is, from the Mūlādhāra padma to the Sahasrāra padma.

(trāṇa) to Jīva by the piercing of the sheath of the Ṣaṭcakra,¹ therefore is She *tri*. By the combination of *gāyat* and *trī* is formed the word Gāyatrī, which is the name of that great Śakti who consists of Mantra.”

In another Tantra it has been said: “Mantra is so called because it is achieved by a mental process. Dhyāna is meditation. In Samādhi² the self merges with the Self of the Iṣṭadevata,³ and Homa is so called because in it offerings are made.”

The nature of mind and its faculties is thus explained in Śāstra :⁴ “Mind is the master of the ten senses, and is situate in the centre of the lotus of the heart. It is also called antahkaraṇa,⁵ because, without the senses, it has no power of action as regards external things—that is, if the ear does not hear a sound, if the skin does not feel a touch, or if the eye does not see a form, if the tongue does not perceive a taste, or if the nose does not perceive a smell, mind becomes incapable of perceiving the nature of anything. The mastery of mind consists in this alone, that when the senses have been directed each on its own object, mind sits in judgment on them. Mind examines what is good and what is bad. Mind has three guṇas⁶—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas. It is from these guṇas that all the different changing states⁷ of mind arise. The guṇas being three, therefore, the three mental states are also threefold according as they are sāttvik, rājasik, and tāmasik. The sāttvik states are non-attachment to the world,⁸ forgiveness, generosity, and the like. The rājasik states are passion, anger, greed, striving, and the like; and laziness, error, lethargy, and the like, are tāmasik states. Sāttvik states lead only to virtuous acts, rājasik only to sin, and tāmasik states give rise neither to sin nor virtue, but merely waste a life, which is spent to no purpose.”

“Antahkaraṇa”⁹ is fourfold—namely, manas, of which the function is doubt;¹⁰ buddhi, of which the function is certainty;¹¹ and

¹ That is, the process called Ṣaṭcakrabhedha by which the roused Kuṇḍalinī pierces and ascends the six Cakras until She unites with the Śiva of the Sahasrāra.

² Ecstasy.

³ That is, the Deity which a particular person worships.

⁴ The Pañchadaśī.

⁵ Literally, means “doing inside”.

⁶ Qualities or principles.

⁷ Vikāra.

⁸ Vairāgya.

⁹ The antahkaraṇa, which is the ego in general (Ahomārtha antahkaraṇa sāmānyam—Yoga Vāsiṣṭha), is really one, though its functions are distinguished as above.

¹⁰ Manas is that mental faculty which considers whether the subject presented to it is this or that—“doubt”—manah sankalpa vikalpakātmakam (Sāṅkhya Tattva Kaumudī).

¹¹ After manas functions it presents its object to the self, which sets itself as subject against it. Then Buddhi, which is determination (Adyavasāya buddhi, ii chapter. xiii. Sūtra. Sāṅkhya Pravacana Darśanam), follows with its quality

ahāṅkāra¹ and citta,² of which the functions are egoism and remembrance³ respectively.

The function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of doubt, is called "manas"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of certainty, is called "buddhi"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of self-consciousness, is called "ahāṅkāra"; and the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of remembrance, is called "citta". In the sphere of worship "citta" occupies the first place. Remembrance of Mantra and Devatā, contemplation on the meaning of Mantra, and meditation on Devatā, and all such related matters, are accomplished by processes of the function of "citta". The meaning of "akṣa" is sense. The taking cognizance by the senses of anything is called in the Śāstra "pratyakṣa".⁴ A sense devoid of consciousness cannot perceive. The senses are but the doors through which the antahkaraṇa perceives all directly perceptible things. This is the reason why in dreamless sleep,⁵ swoon, and delirium, the mind, being unable to function, even things close by are not perceived, despite the existence of the senses. When mind has perceived a thing through the gate of sense, the thought of that thing continues like the steady flow of a current in the antahkaraṇa, which is not possessed by any thing else. But just as innumerable waves rise and fall during the rainy seasons upon the heaving bosom of a river, so various operations of the mind, working upon the innumerable things of the outside world, come and go in the antahkaraṇa of Jīva. In consequence, no particular function of the mind is stationary even for a moment. Some other appears and thrusts it aside. That process by which the antahkaraṇa endeavours to put aside a later and to recall an earlier operation is remembrance, or function of citta. The next question is, What will citta remember? How can citta remember that which has not been registered by the senses and perceived by the mind? Unless a thing has once been perceived, its remembrance is not possible. Here it may be objected that persons in dreams perceive heaven, places of pilgrimage, and the effulgent forms of Devas and Devīs which they have never seen before. How can these things be reflected in the mind during dreams without having first been seen by the physical eye? This objection has no force, because all such things as are perceived in

¹ Self-consciousness—the ego recognizing itself (abhimāna ahāṅkāra, ii, chap. xvi, Sūtra, *ibid.*).

² A term, in its wide signification meaning "mind" or the antahkaraṇa in general, but here meaning that which functions as cintā, "contemplation" of a present or remembered object of thought. In Sāṅkhya, as opposed to Vedānta, Cintā is included in Buddhi.

³ Involved in all contemplation.

⁴ Direct perception.

⁵ Susupti.

dreams are mental. During sleep all the senses become inactive, mind alone remaining conscious. In the dream-play mind is the only actor, so that, whatever is shown, the acts and scenes of that play are but the sport of that one actor assuming different characters. Lions, tigers, snakes, bears, wife, son, friend, and servant, heaven and hell, and all such things seen in dreams are nothing but transformations of the antahkaraṇa. Whatever the mind has at any time seen, heard, or thought, remains engraved thereon like marks on a stone. For various reasons, in sleep subsequent superimposed impressions disappear, laying former marks exposed to view. As the outer curtain is raised, the inner scene is revealed. It is not that heaven has never been perceived. All that we can say is that it has not been perceived in this birth. We have no right to say that it was not perceived in any previous birth. These matters¹ will, however, be explained in our discourse on reincarnation. This much only we shall say here, that mind is the builder² of the heaven seen in dream, when it perceives not by aid of the senses, but works only with the aid of such materials as were perceived by it before. It is with such materials that the mind builds in dream heaven, earth, hell, and all such things. Mind, then, without the aid of eye or ear, sports with such things as it has seen or heard by the eye or ear, but with this difference, that by bringing one thing in contact with some other previously perceived thing, it makes both appear in a form different from their real one. True, we see heaven in dreams, but the idea that that heaven is heaven is but a reflection of the heaven which the ear has perceived through Vedas and Vedāṅgas. Had we not heard the beauty of heaven described by Itihāsas,³ Purāṇas, and the like, and impressed that heaven in our minds, the idea of heaven would never have been found within us, and without such idea we should never have seen heaven in dream. It is the previous impressions caused by our having heard of heaven which makes us see heaven in the dream picture. In this lies the distinctive character of the picture. The palaces, temples, woods, and groves which we see in it are but reflections of things which we have seen on earth, with this difference, that through its previous impressions the mind decks them out in various ways. In the case of a shining city seen in dream the brilliance as well as the city are of previous perception. Mind only puts the brilliance and the city together. Dense forests full of animals of prey have always existed, but to-day mind places me before a tiger in such a forest. In this alone is to be seen the handiwork of mind, the hidden mystery of the drama, the characteristic of the dream. It is for this reason that I have said that a thing which has not been perceived by one of the five senses can never be seen in dream, for mind, the showman, does not contain it in his store-house. Dreams

¹ Tattvasamuccaya² Vidyakarmas³ Itihāsa

relating to Devatās worshipped by Sādhakas are, however, brought about by a different process, which we shall explain in the chapter on the eight forms of Siddhi of a Sādhaka.

This instance of dream proves that, whether in waking or sleep, citta cannot remember anything which has not been heard, touched, seen, tasted, or smelt.

Even in the case of meditation upon a Mantra some one or other of these five sense-principles must be present. In the case of the Gāyatrī there is much difficulty on this point.

WORSHIP OF GĀYATRĪ

Many people nowadays believe that it is the Brahman without attribute who is the Devatā of the Gāyatrī, so that with the Gāyatrī Mantra only his attributeless aspect should be contemplated. But in this there is a difficulty. The attributeless Brahman is beyond the range of the mind, speech, or senses, and how can mind think or citta remember that which is not within the range of the senses. If it is impossible even in dream to see anything which has not been previously perceived by the senses, how is it possible to do so when awake? The contemplation of the Gāyatrī Mantra is thus rendered impossible. Secondly, the attributeless Brahman is beyond all attributes. That which is such shows neither favour nor disfavour, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, so that nothing should be desired or expected from it in this Samsāra. And what is the use of going to that from which nothing can be obtained, of which nothing can be expected, and to whom nothing is near, and nothing is distant?

It may be said that Gāyatrī does not ask anyone to go or come, but only to sit down and meditate. But meditation is not possible without mind. The latter is intimately associated with the three qualities. The supreme Brahman is without them. It is, therefore, as impossible to hold the firmament between a pair of tongs as it is to worship the attributeless Brahman by a mind with attributes. Thirdly, whether we be on the paths of knowledge,¹ devotion,² or work,³ worship of the Brahman without attribute is against all opinions, reason, and Śāstra. "The mental process by which the self is related to the Brahman with attributes is called worship." For this reason it would have been preferable that anything else than worship should be done in relation to the attributeless Brahman, which it is supposed the Gāyatrī seeks to establish. But how can we help it? The Śāstra has, again, said: "The twice-born—that is, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, and Vaiśyas—are all Śāktas,⁴ and not Śaivas or Vaiṣṇavas;

¹ Jñāna.

² Bhakti.

³ Karma.

⁴ The Śāstra has, again, said: "The twice-born—that is, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, and Vaiśyas—are all Śāktas, and not Śaivas or Vaiṣṇavas;

for they all worship Gāyatrī Devī, the Mother of the Vedas." This means that, whatever one may become afterwards, whether Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura,¹ or Gāṇapatya,² one is at base a Śākta.

For Gāyatrī, who is the Mother of the Vedas, and from whom a person derives his twice-born character, is Herself an embodiment of mighty Śakti.

Here also it has been said: "All worship Gāyatrī Devī." How can one who is attributeless be made the subject of a mind with attributes? Fourthly, it is said that the Brahman which Gāyatrī seeks to establish is attributeless. Śāstra, however, says that, when meditating on Gāyatrī during japa,³ She should be contemplated under three forms according as it is morning, noon, or evening. In the morning She is Gāyatrī, and appears as a young girl, rosy like the young sun. She is two-armed Brāhmaṇī,⁴ riding a swan,⁵ holding in her hand rudrākṣa beads,⁶ the thread, and begging-bowl,⁷ residing in the disc of the sun, the presiding Devī⁸ of the Ṛgveda. At noon She is Sāvitrī, and appears as a young woman, dark as the petals of a blue lotus. She is Vaiṣṇavī,⁹ riding the bird Garuda, holding in Her four arms a conch shell,¹⁰ discus,¹¹ mace,¹² and a lotus, residing in the orb of the sun, the presiding Devī of the Yajurveda. In the evening She is Sarasvatī, and appears as an older woman of spotless white beauty. She is three-eyed Rudrāṇī,¹³ crowned with the crescent moon, riding a bull, holding a trident¹⁴ and drum,¹⁵ residing in the solar disc, the presiding Devī of the Sāmaveda.

In the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya on Sandhyā,¹⁶ as prescribed in the Yajurveda, the following passages are quoted: "Gāyatrī at morn,

¹ Worshipper of the sun.

² Worshipper of Ganeśa.

³ That is, Dhyāna, during recitation (japa) of mantra, as the Catholic, when saying the rosary, thinks, of each scene of the joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries.

⁴ Feminine aspect or Śakti of Brahmā.

⁵ Hamsa, which is also described as a goose or flamingo, the vehicle (Vāhana) of Brahmā.

⁶ The seed of a fruit, used for mālā (rosary), etc.

⁷ Kamaṇḍalu, used by ascetics to carry food given to them.

⁸ Adhiṣṭatrī.

⁹ Feminine aspect or Śakti of Viṣṇu, whose Vāhana is the Bird-King Garuda.

¹⁰ Śaṅkha.

¹¹ Cakra.

¹² Gadā, all three held by Viṣṇu.

¹³ Feminine aspect or Śakti of Rudra (Śiva), whose Vāhana is a bull.

¹⁴ Trīśūla.

¹⁵ Damaru, a small "hour-glass" drum, held as well as the trident by Śiva.

¹⁶ Daily worship, performed at morning, noon, and eventide.

Sāvitrī at noon, Sarasvatī at eventide. She bears these three names at these three times of the day, and She herself is Sandhyā at all three times (Vyāsa).

“The morning Sandhyā is Gāyatrī, the noon Sandhyā is Sāvitrī, and the evening Sandhyā is Sarasvatī” (Yājñavalkya).

“Gāyatrī is red, Sāvitrī is white (according to some¹ Veda), and Sarasvatī is dark (according to some¹ Veda). These three appearances of Gāyatrī have been mentioned for the three Sandhyās. In meditation at other times She should be contemplated upon as being of a white colour” (Vyāsa).

“Three-footed Gāyatrī who in Her three feet embodies the three Śaktis² of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara; Her alone should the twice-born seek and worship in three forms.”

Again, it has been ordained that this very Gāyatrī, who appears as Śakti, should be contemplated as a male at the time of prāṇāyāma³ thus:

“At the time of inspiration⁴ of breath contemplate (according to some¹ Veda) the Mahātmā⁵ dark as the petals of a blue lotus, with four arms in the circle of the navel. At the time of retention of breath⁶ contemplate (according to some⁷ Veda) Brahmā, the grandfather of the world,⁸ red of body, with four mouths seated on a lotus in the region of the heart. At expiration⁹ of breath contemplate Maheśvara,¹⁰ the Destroyer of sin, clear, fair and white, like the purest crystal in the region of the forehead.”

Oh, thou Brāhmaṇa, who hast privilege¹¹ in Veda and worshippest Gāyatrī, tell me now, do these forms represent that aspect of the Brahman which is without attributes?

Whether the Brahman be with or without attribute, and possessed of form or not, will be hereafter discussed. Śāstra says that the Brahman whom the Gāyatrī speaks of is without attribute, but it also says that at time of japa and prāṇāyāma His form with attributes should be contemplated. How are we to harmonize these two statements of Śāstra? If in Gāyatrī He is explained to be without attribute, why does Śāstra again enjoin that He should be contemplated with attributes? How shall we establish a concordance between these apparently conflicting statements? We shall deal with this matter afterwards. But here we ask why has this conflict come about? Has Śāstra itself the power to determine anything in Him?¹²

¹ Sic in original.

² Powers.

³ Regulation of breath, or breath exercises (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Pūraka.

⁵ Great Spirit; here Viṣṇu.

⁶ Kumbhaka.

⁷ Sic in original.

⁸ Loka.

⁹ Recaka.

¹⁰ Śiva.

¹¹ Literally, “enjoyest adhikāra in Veda.”

Of course not. Is it not bound to say that which He really is? Had the Śāstra been the creation of mere human authorship then there would certainly have been much ground both for affirmance and denial. But according to the Āryan view Śāstra is not a human production, but the production of Him concerning whom these questions arise. How then can objection arise as to why the Śāstra has said this or that? Bhagavān Himself takes his own portraits in His own camera. These portraits reproduce the different appearances in which He is sitting before it. His will is the sole cause of these differences. For this reason an objection as to why Śāstra has said this or that is fundamentally impossible.

THE VĀCYA¹ AND VĀCAKA¹ ŚAKTIS OF A MANTRA

Sādhakas will particularly bear in mind that not only in the Gāyatrī but in every Mantra there are two Śaktis—the Vācyā Śakti and the Vācaka Śakti. The Devatā who is the subject of a Mantra,² is the Vācyā Śakti, and the Devatā who is the Mantra itself³ is Vācaka Śakti. For instance, the Devatā presiding⁴ over all Viṣṇu Mantras is Durgā in the Mantra of the hymn of one thousand names of Durgā. Durgā is the Devatā and Mahāmāyā is the Śakti. In the hymn of a thousand names of Viṣṇu, Paramātmā Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Devatā, and the son of Devakī⁵ is the Śakti, and so on. As the seed lies inside the fruit so the Vācyā Śakti lies within the Vācaka Śakti. As one cannot see the seed without penetrating through the fruit, so one cannot perceive the true nature of the Vācyā Śakti without first worshipping the Vācaka Śakti. It is the Vācyā Śakti who is the life of a Mantra, and the Vācaka Śakti is that by which such life is sustained. Without life what is there to sustain? And if it be not sustained life is not possible. For this reason, without both of these two Śaktis a Mantra cannot even be awakened⁶ and Siddhi cannot be obtained in it.⁷ In particular, without worship of the Vācaka Śakti life cannot be infused into a Mantra.⁸ To think of Sādhana and Siddhi in connection with an unconscious Mantra is as though one were to take

¹ These terms are explained in the text.

² Pratipādyā Devatā.

³ Mantramayī Devatā.

⁴ Adhiṣṭātri residing in or presiding over. Every mantra has its Adhiṣṭātri Devatā.

⁵ Mother of Kṛṣṇa.

⁶ That is, there is no mantracaitanya. Unless the mantra is awakened in and by the consciousness of the sādhaṅka the mantra thus becoming parcel of the consciousness of the sādhaṅka himself, it is mere dead sound and letter and without fruit.

⁷ Mantrasiddhi (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁸ The conditioned consciousness necessarily works by and through form (which is the nature of its thinking) to the formless "That" which manifests to

a dead child in one's lap, and thought to attain worldly prosperity with its help. By worship¹ the Sādhaka must here understand not the worship of the twentieth century spreading like some contagious disease, but the worship ordained by Śāstra for the Āryan race. For the fruit of this worship, to which we shall refer, is stated in the Śāstra. The Mantra of this worship is not prayer or self-dedication, ending in roaring thunder and storm-clouds in an autumnal sky.² The first fruit of its utterance is a shower of glances from Devas powerful enough to deluge the universe, and the last is the wealth of Siddhi. As the waters of earth drawn by the sun gather in the sky, and then fall on the earth as rain and are dried up, and again and again are drawn by the sun, and fall and are dried up, so is this dualistic world drawn towards the brilliant solar orb which is the subject of the Gāyatrī, and then descends as knowledge of the non-dualistic truth,³ flooding the dry dualistic samsāra, making a current of non-dualistic Brahma-knowledge and Brahma-bliss to flow all over the dualistic universe, setting aside illusive dualism, drawing non-dualistic knowledge towards Her from whom dualistic existence originates. And in the meantime the wealth of the eight Siddhis⁴ grows and ripens, filling the vast universe, the field of action⁵ belonging to that worthy cultivator the Sādhaka. For this reason we are not to understand by the Gāyatrī Mantra the beginning of a storm, but the Mother, who is fair as clouds laden with water. The attributeless Vācyā Śakti, who is the subject of the Gāyatrī, knows that Her aspect without attribute is unapproachable by Jīvas who have attributes. She has therefore blessed the world of devotees by the assumption of form with attributes favourable to the Sādhana and Siddhi of the Sādhaka, and it is this form dwelling in the hearts of devotees which is the Vācaka Śakti resident in the Gāyatrī Mantra. It is the lustre of Her colours, white, yellow, blue, and red, which manifests itself in the lustre of Kulakuṇḍalini,⁶ voicing the fifty letters of the Alphabet. It is of Herself that every letter speaks. Śāstra therefore says: "Oh, Muni, who can relate the unparalleled greatness of that Ādyā Śakti?⁷ Śiva Himself, with his five mouths, has failed to describe it. When death approaches the dweller at Benares who longs for liberation, to him Śambhu⁸ Himself appears, and utters in His ear the great Mantra called Tāraka-Brahma in the form in which it was given by his Guru, and thus grants him the supreme liberation of Nirvāṇa. Oh, Jaimini Brāhmaṇa and Ṛṣi! it is that great Śakti who gives the liberation of Nirvāṇa, for She alone is the bija⁹ of all Mantras. Oh, high-souled

¹ Upāsana.² That is, in moaning, weeping, etc.³ Tattva.⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.⁵ Karma.⁶ The Devī whose seat is in the Mūlādhāra.⁷ Primal Śakti.⁸ Śiva.⁹ Seed.

man, all Vedas have described that Guru of liberation as the Devatā who resides in all Mantras. In the city of Benares, Maheśvara, desirous of granting liberation to all creatures, even to such as hares, insects, and the like, who have received no initiation, Himself utters in their ears at the time of death the name Durgā, the great Tāraka-Brahma Mantra.”¹

Again, in the chapter on Creation in the same Śāstra, it has been said: “High-souled man! in this manner Bhagavān Brahmā created the whole world, and Prakṛti Devī, appearing through part of Herself as Sāvitrī, whom the twice-born worship at three sandhyās,² received Him as Her husband. Similarly the Devī incarnated Herself in part as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and in Her play received Viṣṇu, the maintainer of the three worlds, as Her husband.”

Over and above this there are descriptions of Her innumerable manifestations³ in the form of the Mātṛkā varṇas.⁴ To these aspects we shall refer in their proper place. In fact, there is no difference in substance between the different states, Vācya and Vācaka, of Sacchidānandamayī.⁵ As clouds are the compact state of water, so the aspect with attributes of the Vācaka Śakti is but the compact state of the attributeless Vācya Śakti. As clouds moved by the wind liquefy and pour rain, so, moved by the love of devotees, the Deva with form and attributes gratifies them by manifesting to their view that aspect of Hers without attributes which pervades the universe. Sādhana and Siddhi are the necessary processes to secure such gratification. For this reason we find in Śāstra that whenever She has out of Her extreme favour to a devotee fully manifested Herself, She has, despite of Her being formless, shown the world-form⁶ as Her own form. Had the Vācaka Śakti been separate from the Vācya Śakti, how were it possible for the unlimited Śakti extending throughout the universe to appear in that limited form? How could the womb of a limited form hold this universe? And so, oh, devotee, I say the cloud is but a condensed mass of particles of water. Open your heart, cry “Oh, Mother!” fan it with the wind of devotion,⁷ and then you will see that a copious incessant downpour will deluge the three worlds. And then, not only ourselves, but the whole dualistic world will enter and sink in the unfathomable womb of the one and only existence.⁸ When the Śakti with attributes resident in the Mantra is, by dint of the Sādhana of the Sādhaka, awakened, She will open the gate of the monistic truth, when it will become possible to see the true nature and essence⁹ of this universe.

¹ Mahābhāgavata Discourse between Vyāsa and Jaimini.

² Morning, noon, and evening.

³ Vibhūti.

⁴ Letters of the alphabet.

⁵ She whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss: the definition

Just as in order to obtain a knowledge of the magic art of acting the actors and actresses must themselves play their parts, so unless the Actor and Actress in the play of this world themselves graciously show us their art, none can give a true perception of what is Brahma vidya.¹ But the matter is different for those who, appearing themselves in the character of actors and actresses, make a play of that play, who in reading dramas themselves become the dramatis personæ, and who the moment they close their eyes cause the universe with attributes to vanish, and see the attributeless Brahman.² For they are themselves both exhibitors and spectators, both actors and audience. They can change their character ten times in an hour, and themselves enjoy the sight of it. They can do what they like. We have nothing to say to it. Nevertheless, whatever others may say, they themselves know that they are not one whit better than what they were before, but have merely assumed a part. So much about the playing of parts; the seeing of the real play is a different matter. But the thirst of the heart of those who hope that He will play, and they will see; that He will dance, and they will be the cause of His dancing; that He will show His real aspect and they will enjoy it to their hearts' content, cannot be satisfied by the sight of this worthless play. Their solemn resolve is that so long as new and charming clouds do not appear in the sky, they would rather cry with plaintive hearts and parched throats incessantly, like a cātaka,³ in this life, tormented by the three kinds of sorrow,⁴ than, being drawn by the false attraction of the mirage, rush towards it like foolish deer, and be untimely consumed with the fire of a burning thirst. Sooner or later a day must come in the year of human life when the eye will be soothed and the heart refreshed by the blissful world-filling beauty of the soothing shining cloud, and the thirst of the heart will be satiated for life by the shower of Her gracious glances full of nectar. For this reason the devotee depends on Her alone, is all submission to Her, never begs at the door of others, and says: "Oh, Mother, I know that Thy true aspect is Brahmakaivalya,⁵ that Thou art without attribute, and attainable by true knowledge alone. I know that Thou art also full of kindness for Thy devotee. I know that Thou art our Lady,⁶ and that the universe is Thy form. I know that Thy substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and that Thou in various forms grantest the

¹ Knowledge of Brahman.

² A remark directed against the Brahmo sect, who are here described as thinking that they can do without Sādhana, and by simply closing their eyes can see the Nirguṇa Brahman.

³ A bird which is said to live only on rain.

⁴ *Vide ante.*

⁵ The supreme liberation.

desires of Sādhakas. I know that Thou holdest the three worlds in play. I know, oh, Mother, that Thou art the ordainer of all ordainers. But still I know that for the man who is helpless, destitute, and woebegone, who seeks a shelter from danger, and who has no means of fulfilling his desire, Thou art the sole amulet, Mantra, and healing balm. It is in order that She may grant this prayer of the Sādhaka and to prove the truth of this faith that She who is the Vācyā Śakti, whose substance is eternal consciousness, assumes playful forms as Vācaka Śakti. Dwelling as Daughter in such a form the Mother of the world said to Her Father, Himālaya: 'None can comprehend my subtle¹ form without first having duly meditated² on my gross³ form. The sight of this subtle form releases Jīva from the bonds of Samsāra, and gives him Nirvāṇa Samādhi.⁴ For this reason a Sādhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge in my gross forms, and then, having by Kriyāyoga duly worshipped these forms slowly and step by step, think of My supreme, unwasting, subtle form.' "

The Sādhaka will from this realize that it is only after full worship of Her in Her aspects with form that he has the right to think, little by little, of Her subtle aspect. Now where is that subtle aspect, and where stand you and I?

As in Gāyatrī, so in every Mantra, the Vācyā Śakti is without attribute, and the Vācaka Śakti is with attribute, for the latter is the object of worship and the former the object which is to be attained. The Vācaka Śakti must be used as a means and support in order that the Vācyā Śakti may be attained.

So long as I must worship with this, my mind and heart preserving the distinction that I am the worshipper and She is the worshipped, so long there is no other alternative than to worship that aspect of Her which has both form and attributes. But on the day that my mind and heart sink in the womb of Prakṛti⁵, the twenty-four tattvas⁶ will disappear in Herself, all egoism will be destroyed, and I shall lose myself in that state beyond all speech and thought, in which "neither you nor I exist". On that day where am I or who is mine? Your existence depends on mine, so that if I cease to exist where, then, are you? And even if "you" do exist there will be no "I" to discover "you". Only so long as a river does not fall and lose itself in the sea does the distinction between river and sea exist. But when the river mingles with the sea the former ceases to exist; and so does the sea to the river, which is lost in it, though it exists for all the world besides. The individuality of the

¹ Sūkṣma.

² Dhyāna.

³ Sthūla.

⁴ Ecstasy of liberation.

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁶ Of Sāṅkhya—viz., Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṅkāra, Manas, Indriyas, Tan-

river ceasing to exist, it can no longer say what it has become owing to the loss of its self. There is then no means of either separating the "self" of the river, nor can the river separate itself. For this reason I say that when I cease to exist She, too, notwithstanding Her existence, ceases to exist so far as I am concerned, for with the destruction of my individuality Her individuality in its relationship to me has also been destroyed. Now tell me, O Sādhaka! whom shall you worship when sinking in the attributeless aspect of the Self. This state is not worship, but the ultimate fruit of it called Nirvāṇa or Brahmakaivalya. In this state the worshipper becomes one with the worshipped. There remains neither worshipper nor worshipped, but only She. If you consider this as also suitable for worship, I know not where in the domain of the Lady with dishevelled hair¹ you can get liberation. However that may be, the question is one which concerns only those who have attained that state. We say to you, Jīva, that so long as that state of a Jīva lasts, no other means are available to you but worship. So long as you must worship you must, in order to maintain that worship as such, continue to worship a Deity which possesses form. Do not be afraid. Neither you nor I will have to clutch indiscriminately at anything or everything.

She who created Jīva knew beforehand the pangs of the Jīva's heart, and because She must be attained the Daughter of the Mountain has surrendered Herself to various forms. Because of this we on earth may dare to stretch our hands towards heaven to seize Her. Although, whether on earth, in heaven, or in the nether world, She is one without a second, She has yet assumed various forms as Mother of the dualistic world. It is the sight of this grand play of Brahmamayī which has led Śāstra to say in the Kulārṇava Tantra:²

"Brahman, who is all consciousness, without body or part, and beyond the power of speech and mind, builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sādhakas."

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Sadāśīva says to the Devī: "Hear why Thou art worshipped, and why Thy Sādhana leads Jīva to Brahma-Sāyujya³? Thou art the supreme Prakṛti of the Supreme Soul. O Śivē!⁴ the whole world is born of Thee. Hence Thou art its Mother. O Lady! everything in this world, be it great or small, moving or unmoving, has been created by Thee, and exists under Thy control. Thou art the Mūlaprakṛti⁵ of all Vidyās,⁶ and the origin of even Us⁷; Thou knowest

¹ Devī as Kālī and other appearances (Mūrti) is so represented.

² Chap. vi.

³ Union with Brahman.

⁴ The Devī.

⁵ The root or primal Prakṛti.

⁶ Śaktis.

the Tattva¹ of the entire universe, yet none knows Thy true aspect. Thou art Kālī, Tārā, Durgā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, and Dhūmāvātī. Thou art Bagalā, Bhairavī, and Cinnamastā. Thou art Annapūrṇā² and the Devī of speech.³ Thou art Mahālakṣmī, who dwells in a lotus. Thou dost embody all Śaktis. In Thee are all Devas. Thou art subtle as well as gross, manifested as well as unmanifested. Formless, Thou dost possess also forms. Who can know Thy true aspect? For the success of worshippers, the welfare of the whole world, and the destruction of the Dānavas,⁴ Thou assumeth all kinds of bodies. Thou art four-armed, two-armed, six-armed, and eight-armed. For the preservation of the universe Thou holdeth all kinds of arms and weapons. Mantra, Yantra,⁵ and other modes of Sādhana, as well as the three forms of worship, Paśu, Vīra, and Divya,⁶ are all described in Tantra in accordance with these different aspects of Thine." The same Tantra says: "Thou dost embody all Śaktis; Thou art the supreme Ādyāśakti.⁷ Our Śaktis⁸ as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe, are derived from Thy Śakti. Thy eternal forms are of varied colour and shape, and adored by means of various forms of Sādhana. Who can describe all these? It is by the grace of a drop of Thy mercy that it has been given to Me to describe in Kulatantra Āgama and other Śāstras the mode of Sādhana and worship of those forms of Thine."

From these Śāstrik references it appears that the Daughter of the Mountain, knowing the incapacity of Jīva to conceive any idea of Her subtle nature,⁹ incarnated Herself in various forms for Sādhana and Siddhi, the welfare of the three worlds, and for the relief of earth from the burden of its sins.¹⁰ This is the firm faith of those who proceed along the path of Sādhana under the control and protection of Śāstra. Different is the opinion of those who hurry along the path of selfishness, keeping Śāstra under their control. None can object to another preaching his own individual opinions. But those who hide themselves under the cloak of Śāstra, and in an unnatural way kill or wound it, stabbing its heart with wrong meanings and perverted interpretations, pouring into it the poison of selfishness, proclaiming to the world that they are doctoring the Śāstra from the poisonous bag, full of sharp weapons of selfishness belonging to modern social reformers, founders of religion, critics, and

¹ Truth, Principle, Nature, Essence.

² Various forms of the Devī, including the Daśamahāvidyā.

³ Sarasvatī.

⁴ Demons.

⁵ The worshipped diagram.

⁶ The three Bhāvas.

⁷ Primal Śakti.

⁸ That is, the powers of Brahmā and others.

murdering charlatans, must be exposed in order to show with what excellent remedies they trumpet their doctoring of the religious world. We must also see whether the very wasted, contracted, and slumbering state of religion which they have brought about in the present time by virtue of their treatment is merely a sleep of rest for religion, or its eternal sleep in death. In this section we shall disclose to Sādhakas that new treatment of Sādhanadharma by these doctors, which consists of hitting its head with the Brahma-weapon:¹

Cinmayasyāprameyasya niṣkalasyāśarīriṇah.

Sādhakānām hitārthāya brāhmaṇo rūpakalpanā.

That is to say, Brahman who is all consciousness, without body or parts and beyond the reach of speech and mind,² builds forms for the benefit of Sādhakas.

We have given before the interpretation of this verse, based on the authority of Śāstra. But the above mentioned doctors are opposed to this interpretation. They say that worshippers have themselves given imaginary forms to Brahman for their own purposes, although, as a matter of fact, Brahman has no form. If this be true, then Sādhakas have not only given imaginary forms to Brahman, but their alleged purposes and benefit must be imaginary. If Brahman has really no form, how can we believe that a true purpose can be served by attributing false and imaginary forms to Him? You may say that contemplation of form merely produces concentration of mind, and that, by His grace, gives siddhi. Here we ask, Does it not make one feel inclined to laugh when one thinks of something as existing which one knows to be non-existing? It is neither contemplation nor concentration, but the play of a child with Brahman. A girl knows well enough that a doll can never be a living thing. She is not also ignorant of the fact that she is a little un-married maiden. Still when she plays she shows great concern for her doll-son, pretends that it is crying, feigns to give it milk, takes it on her lap, caresses it, and so satisfies her own mind. The attribution of false forms to Brahman is exactly similar. I know that the attributeless Brahman has no pleasure, displeasure, virtue, vice, attraction, attachment, pity, generosity, no love, affection, dual relation, or even body. Is it not then absolutely useless for me to meditate upon imaginary forms of that attributeless reposeful Brahman who has no form, and to worship Him to gain His favour? Who will deny that they are madmen who believe that during the eternal flow of worldly events from time immemorial Āryan worshippers have been simply wasting their energies in such a useless task?

¹ A pun: the Brahma-weapon is a very dangerous one. Here it refers to the modern eclectic sect, called the Brahma Samāj.

² Aprameya

Secondly, if forms are imagined in order with their help to acquire concentration of mind, why abandon such forms as are naturally beautiful and calculated at the very first glance to captivate the mind; and why make the restless mind still more restless by the imagination of all kinds of unnatural and various forms for Devas and Devīs. There is no objection to such an argument in the case of those who have imagined such unnatural forms. But such an idea is dangerous to those whose success depends on the dictates of Śāstra. Whilst worshipping, I am independent, but at the time of receiving the fruits of worship I am dependent on Śāstra! It is very difficult to enter into this monstrous mystery.

Does Siddhi obey my command? Is it not the height of impudence or the raving of a madman to suppose that Siddhi will appear and move in the way I shall order it, and follow upon whatever form I shall contemplate? Knowing that this vanity of free thought in Śāstra must one day be shattered, Bhagavān, in the discourse between Śrī Bhagavān and Uddhava in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata,¹ says:

“The Sādhaka who disobeys Śāstrik ordinances and does sādhanā according to his will, not only fails to achieve siddhi, but also goes to Hell.” His licence deprives him of siddhi, and the great sin of disobedience to Śāstra leads him to Hell.

Will you and I to-day give imaginary forms to Him whose will has created the infinite of the Brahmāṇḍa? It is, indeed, creditable to you that you, being a man, have been able to believe it. I ask, What is your authority for this imagination of forms? You will reply that Śāstra had said: “Sādhakānāmhitārthāya, brahmaṇorūpakalpanā.”² I find nothing to object to in what Śāstra has said, but the danger lies in the manner in which it is understood.

¹ Chap. xii.

² *Vide ante*; the proper translation is, “For the good of sādhakas Brahman builds forms,” but, as pointed out later, the author’s opponents translate the

CHAPTER V

COMMANDS OF ŚĀSTRA

ŚĀSTRA, which sees Brahman as He really is, has said that Brahman Himself builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sādhakas. But you take the Śāstra to mean that worshippers have given imaginary forms to Brahman. The word Sādhakānām is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Sādhaka. This sixth case, according to you, indicates the nominative, and you take the word Rūpakalpanā with Sādhakānām. Again, the word Brāhmaṇah which is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Brahman is supposed by you to have its sixth case in the genitive sense. You thus explain the whole thing as “forms have been imagined by Sādhakas in relation to Brahman”. But this is not its right explanation. It is the word Sādhakānām, which has its sixth case in the genitive sense, and should be read with the word hitārthāya. Again, the word Brāhmaṇah has its sixth case in the nominative sense, and should be read with rūpakalpanā. Thus the whole verse comes to mean “forms have been built by Brahman for the benefit of Sādhakas”. Although both sides may be equally liable to mistake, still the view which I have taken harmonizes with the context of the Śāstrik saying. For the above verse appears in the Kulārṇava Tantra in connection with the worship of Devas possessing forms. First Devī says:

“I now desire to hear of the character of worship, so tell me the mode of worship in the purification of Kula articles, etc.” In answer to this question Bhagavān Śiva, the Creator of all things, explains in the chapter on Worship, the necessity or otherwise of invoking Devās, and establishes the fact of the possession of form to be the very foundation of invocation. It is in this connection that the verse appears whilst making provision for the worship of embodied Deities. To say that it is impossible that they should have aspects with form is not merely irrelevant, but disproves the very thing which it is sought to prove. This instance affords no opportunity for the service of selfish ends by giving a fallacious interpretation of the Sanskrit verse.

Secondly, there are ample grounds for the support of my view, namely, (1) If Sādhakas give, according to their desire, imaginary forms to Brahman, why should the eternal Śāstra accept such as evidence? (2) If Sādhakas may create forms according to their own wish, “It is not possible”

hard to guess the number which have been already created by innumerable Sādhakas of different casts of mind, and the countless forms which will also in the future be created. Besides, if worship of all these forms gives siddhi, why has not Śāstra separately provided in the case of them the mode of worship, consisting of Dhyāna¹, Mantra, etc.? (3) If I am independent in the matter of the imagination of forms, why should not also the mode of worship be guided by my own free-will? (4) If I imagine a form according to my own desire, what is there to oblige Īśvara to appear in that form? (5) If I can build forms, why cannot I build Mantras as well? (6) If Mantra Śakti² is guided by my Śakti, why, instead of expending it on Mantra, do I not worship in some other way? (7) Why should one accept a guru in respect of a worship which is to be performed by me according to my imagination? (8) What śakti³ is there in Jīva himself whereby he may obtain supersensual, superhuman siddhi without the help of Śāstra? (9) When have I seen, or heard, or been convinced by argument of such siddhi having been obtained by any person so that I may believe it? (10) Who will be responsible if in trying to obtain such siddhi I happen to fall? (11) Who knows in what time such siddhi may be attained? (12) If siddhi may be attained according to one's own desire, what is the necessity of worshipping Gāyatrī, whose substance is mantra, as said in Śāstra?

These and other grounds are as favourable to my view as they are unfavourable to yours. How will you dare to say that Sādhakas imagine forms without first answering fully these questions I have put against you?

When dealing with Her dhyāna, the Gāyatrī Tantra has said: "She has adopted playful bodies according to Her own desire." Again, in Bhagavadgītā,⁴ Bhagavān Himself (whose form is in question here), has said:

"Though unborn, the imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over Nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through My own Power.

"Whenever there is decay of righteousness. O Bhārata! and there is exaltation of unrighteousness then I Myself come forth.

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness I am born from age to age.

"Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man."⁵

¹ Meditation.

² Potency of mantra.

³ Power.

⁴ Chap. iv, verses 6, 7, 8; and chap. vii, verse 21.

⁵ For convenience, reference is made to a published translation. This and the other extracts from the Bhagavadgītā are from Mrs. Besant's translation, *The Sacred Book of the Lord Krishna*.

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa in Devīmāhātmya¹ says: "Eternal is She whose appearance² is the universe which She pervades, yet hear from me of Her birth in various forms. Wherever She appears to do the work of Devas She is known in the three worlds to be born (although She is in reality free from birth and death)."

The same book in the hymn in praise of the Devī says: "Mother, Thou hast by dividing Thyself into many forms, achieved the destruction of great Asuras,³ the enemies of Dharma. By whom else can this be done?"

The following discourse between Himālaya and Pārvatī appears in Bhagavatī Gītā in Mahābhāgavata:

The Devī said: "O father, Lord of Mountains, of my own free-will have I divided My own form for the purpose of creation into the dual aspects of male and female. Of these, Śiva is the supreme Puruṣa, and Śivé the supreme Śakti.⁴ Great King, Yogīs who discern the truth⁵ speak of Me as Brahmatattva, with its two aspects of Śiva and Śakti.⁶ As Brahmā I create this universe of moving and non-moving things,⁷ and as Mahārudra I, of My own will, destroy it at the time of dissolution.⁸ High-souled Himālaya, it is I, too, who, for the putting down of evil-doers, maintain as Viṣṇu, the supreme Puruṣa, this entire created universe. High-souled Himālaya, it is I, too, who, by repeated incarnations on earth as Rāma and others, destroy Dānavas³ and save this world. Father! of all these eternal and occasional forms of Mine, the greatest is that consisting of Śakti, for it is certain that without Śakti, the spirit in the form of Puruṣa has no power of action. Great King, know all such forms of Mine as have been above mentioned, as well as my forms of daughter and the like visible to you, to be My gross forms. I have already told you what My subtle form is. Great Mountain, none can apprehend My subtle form, the sight of which gives nirvāṇa kaivalya to Jīva without first meditating on My gross form. For this reason a Sādhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge with My gross forms, and after having fully and duly by Kriyāyoga⁹ worshipped these forms, slowly and little by little meditate on my unwasting, subtle, and supreme form."

Himālaya then said: "Mother Maheśvarī, many are Thy gross forms. Which of these should Jīva seek refuge with in order easily to attain to liberation? As thou wouldst favour me, Mahādevī, tell me this."

The Devī replied: "This universe consists of my gross forms. Of all these, the Devī form deserves the highest worship, and soon grants

¹ Chap. i.

² Mūrti.

³ Demons.

⁴ That is, the supreme "male" and "female" principles.

⁵ Tattva.

⁶ See note 2.

⁷ That is, the organic and inorganic world.

liberation. High-souled Himālaya, that Devī form is also manifold. Of these, the Mahāvidyas grant liberation speedily. Great King, hear their names from me: Mahākālī, Tārā, Śoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Bagalā, Chinnamastā, Mahātripurasundarī,¹ Dhūmāvatī, Mātangi.² All these insure liberation. If Jīva will give his devotion to these forms liberation is of a certainty soon within his reach. Father, by means of Kriyāyoga seek the protection of any of these forms. Directing your mind towards Me alone you will of a surety possess Me. O Mountain, high-souled people who have found Me are never reborn. For them there is no birth in this life transient and full of sorrows. King! to the devoted yogī who ever remembers me with undistracted devotion I grant liberation. If one but once remembers Me with devotion at the time of death he is nevermore overcome with the mass of worldly sorrows. High-souled man! to him who worships Me with devotion and singleness of heart I grant eternal liberation. Seek My protection in My aspect as Śakti. It is that which surely procures liberation, and liberation will be attained by you. Great King! even those who worship other Devatās with respect and devotion really worship Me alone, for I am in all and the giver of reward in every sacrifice. [That is, since I am in everything there is, leaving aside Devatās, nothing in this world which, in a spiritual sense, is separate from me. And as to Devatās, whoever of them may be worshipped, they are merely manifestations of My own greatness; so that, whatever sacrifice may be performed, it is I who, in the form of the Devatā worshipped therein, grant in return for such worship its reward.] But, great King! liberation can never be obtained by those who are devoted to these Devatās alone [that is to say, who in their devotion to the Devatās whom they worship are indifferent, disrespectful, or wanting in devotion to other Devatās, considering the latter to be different from the former]. Therefore with thy mind under control, seek shelter with Me for the loosening of the bonds of physical existence, and without a doubt you shall find Me.”

In the Niruttara Tantra it has been said: “Devī, Śiva and Śakti are each divided according as they are with or without attribute. The supreme attributeless Brahmasanātani³ is full of lustre, as is also the supreme attributeless Puruṣa,⁴ who shines like a great blue jewel. But that attributeless shining Dakṣiṇākālī⁵ is far removed from all prapañcas⁶ [that is to say, Her attributeless aspect, being imperceivable by physical

¹ Kamalā.

² The ten forms which the Devī assumed prior to Dakṣayajña (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ Śakti.

⁴ Śiva.

⁵ See note 3.

⁶ Objects, consisting of the combination of the five tattvas: “earth,”

beings formed by Māyā, lies at a great distance, for it is beyond the reach of Māyā, and therefore, so far as Jīva formed of Māyā is concerned is situate beyond the sea of Māyā].

“In Her attributeless aspect that unbounded Sarasvatī is of unmeasurable power, and the Mūlaprakṛti of the fifteen phases of Śakti, such as Kālī, Kapālīnī, Kulva, and others. Again, in Her state with attributes, when She gives birth to the three Devas—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara—in the great ocean of the original cause,¹ Her womb; it is She who gives birth to Mahākāla, the first-born. It is She who, assuming a female form, gives birth to the entire universe, consisting of moving and unmoving things. It is She who, as Viṣṇumāyā and Mahālakṣmī, has spread Her charm over this entire universe. That Ādyāśakti Dakṣiṇākālī is Siddhavidyā, and, as such, She is Mūlaprakṛti and Puruṣa. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are inseparably connected. One does not exist independent of the other. United with Śakti, Puruṣa attains Śivahood; and united with Śiva, Prakṛti attains Śaktihood. It is the inseparable connection consisting of this union which is Parabrahmatattva. It is in this union that they should be contemplated. It is of this union that Śiva Mantra consists. In Dhyānayoga² alone should japa be made of this union. The Mantra consisting of this union of theirs is the Mahāmantra, and gives both enjoyment³ and liberation.⁴ He who desires enjoyment attains the four abodes, Sālokya and others,⁵ and he who desires liberation is absorbed in nirvāṇakaivalya. Kālī, unbounded Sarasvatī, is the great desire-gratifying tree⁶ of those who long for the fourfold fruit of dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa,⁷ for She is the sole source of enjoyment and liberation even for Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara. [That is to say, imperfect Jīvas alone, completely under the influence of Māyā, seek from such a tree that fruit which is according to their individual desire. But the peculiarity of this tree is that even those who are the guardians and controllers of Māyā, and who are perfect Īśvaras, have to depend upon it for their individual enjoyment and liberation.] A Sādhaka should be initiated by his Guru, and by virtue of his grace worship Kālī, that great tree gratifying the desires of Mahākāla, who embodies all Mantras and Tantras.”

The following are Sadāśīva's words to Devī in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:⁸ “Mahākāla, the destroyer of the universe, is but another aspect of Thyself. At the time of the great dissolution Kāla will swallow the entire universe. Because of this gathering unto death and destruction of all created things, He is called Mahākāla and you Kālī. The three worlds

¹ Kāraṇa.

² Yoga by meditation.

³ Bhoga.

⁴ Mokṣa.

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁶ Kalpataru.

sing of Thee as the Primal One,¹ because at the time of giving birth Thou didst give birth to even Mahākāla, the first Puruṣa; and as Kālī, because at the time of destruction Thou dost gather into Thyself even Mahākāla, the Destroyer of all. Then Thou alone, in Thy formless aspect, unknowable and beyond speech and mind dost exist. Thou art formless, though possessing form [that is to say, Thou art not bound to any particular form, as a Jīva is who possesses form], for by means of Māyā Thou dost assume innumerable forms according to Thy desire. Thou Thyself art without beginning, and yet art the beginning of all [that is to say, there is none prior to Thee]. It is Thou who createth, preserveth, and destroyeth the world.”

ON FORMLESSNESS AND FORM

Sādhaka, what do you understand from these statements of Śāstra? Are the forms of Brahman imagined by Sādhakas or built by Himself? What clearer evidence than this do you expect from Śāstra? This is why I said that there can be no objection to what Śāstra has said. It is the fault of our intelligence which does all the mischief. Śāstra has repeatedly said that He took forms according to His own desire. But you and I are ashamed of believing this, because on first entering school it dawned on us that “Īśvara is formless and consciousness itself.” Every dawn has its setting, but in the “Dawn of Sense”² there is neither dawning nor setting. From beginning to end, in both purpose and effect, it is only full of accounts of Īśvara’s own self. Many people are therefore troubled with the thought that Śāstra is Īśvara’s³ word, and “the Dawn of Sense” is also Īśvara’s⁴ word, so they know not which to disregard at the risk of going to Hell. The Īśvara of the nineteenth century is truly an extraordinary and wonderful thing: for though, according to Śāstra, Brahman⁵ and Īśvara are in one sense one and the same, yet in another sense they are not so. Brahman is without, whilst Īśvara is with, attributes. Brahman is inactive, while Īśvara creates, preserves, and destroys. But in the various little religions⁶ of the nineteenth century Brahman and Īśvara

¹ Ādyā.

² Bodhodaya, the title of a work for children by the late Pandit Īśvara Chandra Vidyāsāgara. The following passages are a satirical play on the word Īśvara as denoting the Pandit and also the name of God.

³ God.

⁴ The Pandit.

⁵ Brahman as the unknowable Supreme without attributes is contrasted with that aspect of It which manifests Itself in the work of creation, etc., and is adored as the “personal” God (Īśvara).

have come to mean one and the same thing. Such a golden cup of stone was never seen before.¹ This also, indeed, is part of Īśvara's sport! However that may be, He whom the Śāstra names Īśvara can never be formless, for His function is aiśvarya, or lordship over the universe. He who has this self-consciousness of lordship cannot be without attribute, and it is impossible to be formless without being attributeless. Again, self-consciousness is a particular state of mind. He who has mind has surely body, and it is mere tautology to say that He whose body is eternally established possesses form. To call Īśvara the Lord of the universe, devoid of form, whether done under the authority of Śāstra or reason, is as though one said that the ocean was devoid of water. An Īśvara with form is necessary for the creation of a universe with form. Had He been devoid of form, His creation also would have been devoid of it.

Such were our dawning ideas as the result of our training under a schoolmaster in boyhood. What we have subsequently understood of ourselves, and which science is supposed to confirm, is that an Īśvara possessing body can never be omniscient; for we suppose that, having a body, He must necessarily be bound by Māyā, and possessed of limited knowledge. Such being our inference, it would be wrong to hold that Yogīs and Ṛṣīs, who were free of the bonds of life, were unerring either; for they, too, had bodies. Not to mention Īśvara, the powers of Yogīs, Ṛṣīs, Śādhus, and Śādhakas, derived from Siddhi are still daily visible. Even infidels cannot ignore this directly perceptible² truth. Believers as we are, how can you and I ignore it? Is He, then, by whose worship even Jīvas with limited knowledge and under the influence of Māyā become free from the bonds of Māyā, and acquire omniscience—is He not omniscient also? Is not this a point worthy of thought? As when the door of a room is opened the air within it is united with the great spaces without, so by the opening of the doors of their minds composed of the three guṇas the individual³ and the supreme⁴ principles unite, and are merged in the Self of the Parabrahman. Is He by whose grace they achieve this unable to keep Himself free of the influence of Māyā because of His having of His own free-will assumed form?

Śāstra⁵ says: "How can He be subjected to bondage because of His having taken to Himself a body of his own free-will—He who gratifies by the enjoyment of the pollen of His lotus feet Munis who, by the force of Yoga, have thrown off the ties of all Karma, and are no longer bound whatsoever they may do?

¹ A Bengali saying for an impossibility.

² Pratyakṣa.

³ Jīvatattva.

⁴ Parabrahmatattva.

Bhagavān, then, in spite of His contact with Māyā due to the assumption of māyik forms, is free from the bondage of Māyā. This, of course, is a thing unattainable in the Jivatattva.¹ But how can we help that? He is Īśvara for the very reason that such superhuman conditions are possible with Him. His Īśvrahood consists of this superhuman power. Śāstra has therefore said: "Animā, Laghimā, Prāpti, Prākāmya, Mahimā, Īśitva, Vaśitva, and Kāmāvasāyitvā—these are the eight Siddhis of Īśvara."²

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata, in the discourse between Bhagavān and Uddhava, says: "Animā is minuteness so fine as to be imperceptible by the senses,³ Mahimā is greatness. Laghimā is lightness. Prāpti is knowledge of all which the Jīva perceives by His senses, due to the fact that Īśvara is the presiding Devatā of the senses of all living creatures. Prākāmya is the enjoyment of all things heard, seen, etc., Īśitva is the application of Śakti or the spreading of the Śakti of His own māyā over every Jīva in the universe. Vaśitva is freedom from the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas. Kāmāvasāyitvā is the attainment of whatsoever I desire. Good man! these are My eight natural siddhis."

He is Īśvara or Īśvarī, Bhagavān or Bhagavatī, in whom these eight siddhis eternally exist. Now tell me, O Jīva, are these human powers? Without such powers He becomes a mere Jīva like you or me. If He becomes subject to māyā like you or me, what difference is there between Jīva and Īśvara?

Though eternally connected with māyā, māyā is yet subject to Him. Though full of māyā,⁴ He is above it. It has therefore been said in the Vedānta doctrine:

"Prakṛti, in which the Brahman, who is all consciousness⁵ and bliss⁶ is reflected, and which consists of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, is twofold. Prakṛti consisting of pure sattva guṇa is māyā, and prakṛti consisting of impure⁷ sattva guṇa is avidyā. The image of consciousness reflected in māyā is called Īśvara. When reflected in avidyā it is called Jīva. As māyā has but one aspect, so Īśvara, the reflection in it, has but one aspect.⁸ Avidyā which consists of many guṇas, has many aspects, with the result that Jīva, the reflection in it, has also many aspects. The difference between Jīva and Īśvara is that while Īśvara rules māyā, Jīva is subject to it."

¹ World of embodied spirits.

² See *post* and following passage.

³ That is, the power to make oneself as little, as big, as light, as heavy, etc., as one will.

⁴ Māyāmaya.

⁵ Cit.

⁶ Ānanda.

⁷ That is, sattva and the other guṇas.

Both are connected with māyā, but whereas māyā is subject to Īśvara, Jīva is subject to māyā. This is the difference between Jīva and Īśvara. It is only because man cannot conceive the superhuman force of Īśvara's Śakti that he wonders how Īśvara can be almighty and omniscient if he possesses form. Foreseeing such an error, Bhagavān said to Arjuna: ¹

“The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of being.”

In the Bhagavatī Gītā ² the Mother of the universe ³ gave the same instruction to Himālaya:

“Similarly all other sāttvik, rājasik, and tāmasik dispositions which exist derive from Me and exist in Me under My control. But, Great Mountain! I am not under their control. Great King! Jīvas, charmed by My māyā, fail to recognize this all-pervading supreme, unwasting, non-dualistic form of Mine. But, Father! only those who with a single mind worship Me with devotion can cross this vast ocean of māyā and enter into that supreme form of Mine.”

As we cannot directly see the beauty of the lunar orb unless the moon rays come in contact with the eye, so unless the mind and heart become intoxicated with the worship of Him, His true essence ⁴ cannot be perceived. For this reason, although Śāstra gives a thousand and one instructions to persons who have not yet acquired a fitness to receive them, they are but as music to the ears of a deaf man.

The root objection nowadays is that as something without bounds cannot be contained in a receptacle with bounds, as unbounded space cannot be held in a limited room as a lake which measures a yojana ⁵ cannot contain such a mass of water as can deluge the universe, so the limited body of Īśvara cannot possibly hold the śakti ⁶ of Īśvara. But here let us say that while illustrations and comparisons may be of value and adornment in history and literature, yet illustrations taken from the things of this world have not always equal application to matters touching super-worldly realities. It is the height of folly to proceed to discuss the matter with the notion that only that is true which fits with our illustrations, and that that which will not so fit is false. For instance, in worldly matters whoever does a thing, does it with some object. There is no inclination to action which has not a selfish interest in it. If, however, you apply this rule to the matter ⁷ of the creation, will you tell me what selfish interests Īśvara served, or will serve, by creating this universe? Ask all Śāstras and Sub-Śāstras on earth, Veda, Tantra, Purāṇa, Koran, the Bible, etc., and see if you get an answer to this question. Who can say

¹ Bhagavad Gītā, chap. ix, verse ii.

² Part of the Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

³ Jagadambā.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Eight miles.

that for a selfish end Īśvara has created this world? Ask of the greatest and bravest of warriors, "Why has this world been created?" and he will at once be vanquished and fly from the field. All discussions, disputes, inferences, and theories of Philosophy¹ are concerned with such questions as to how the world was created, is preserved, and will be destroyed. But directly the question arises as to why the world was created the six systems of darśana (philosophy) become adarśana (sightless).² The authors of Yoga, Viśeṣa, Mīmāṃsa, Nyāya, and Sāṃkhya, the Veda and Vedānta, are all blind to the path whereby an answer may be got to the question, Why does this saṃsāra exist?" The Sādhaka poet Rāmaprasāda has therefore sorrowfully said: "Six blind men wrote books, and they were called Darśana (philosophies)." When Śāstra does not answer this question I must either be a sceptic, or say Īśvara must have some selfish purpose. But to say that He has self-interest is to divine Him. There can be no self without others, nor self-interest without self. As there can be no happiness without sorrow, nor sorrow without happiness, no light without darkness or darkness without light, so there can be no "others' interest" without "self-interest," and no "self-interest" without "others' interest". If Īśvara, then, created for His own selfish interest, there must certainly have been other interests existing before the creation. For there can be no self without another. And if there are others, then Īśvara is not one without a second, and there must be someone else to dispute His sovereignty (the idea of the Mussalman's Satan comes in imperceptibly here). Secondly, if before Him there was another different from Him, who created that other? If someone else created that other, then Īśvara is not the creator of all. And if it be said that Īśvara Himself created him, then in the first place was He such a fool as to Himself create His own enemy? In the second place, had Īśvara any interest in creating him? If He had such interest, who was that other in respect of whom such interest arose,³ and against whom did Īśvara create him? Proceeding continually in this manner to think of others and others, the world is filled with others only. And if then Īśvara begins His creation He becomes a creator no better than Viśvāmitra.⁴ Secondly, if Īśvara created him without self-interest, what was the reason of being self-interested when creating us?

But be His interest served or not, what right has He to throw me on the rack of this saṃsāra and crush me? You say He is almighty. That He

¹ Darśanaśāstra.

² Darśana means sight. Philosophy is said to be the cause of sight.

³ A play upon the word "Svārtha" (own interest) and "parārtha" (another's interest) in the sense that the first suggests the second.

may or may not be; but I am weak, and He is sufficiently mighty to crush me at every step. Is not, according to you, Īśvara just? Now, what sort of justice is it that He should crush me day and night at every step because He is mighty? You will say that I suffer the fruits of my own karma, and that for this He cannot be blamed. Then I reply: "Who created me and gave me this propensity for doing karma?"¹ It was the work of your Īśvara, and I am unable to understand what sort of mercy this is of your merciful Īśvara to put a thorn into one's eyes, and then to chastise one for crying on that account. Advocates of illustrations tell me now: shall I become a sceptic, or say that Īśvara is extremely partial or selfish? It is to such a conclusion that your illustration leads. Ask this illustration for once whether the selfish propensity of ourselves has any correspondence in Īśvara, and you will see that it will follow the same path as Veda and Vedānta have followed. Press it hard, and the illustration will say: "In the name of Dharma my name is dṛṣṭānta (illustration). I am the end (anta) of what is visible (dṛṣṭa). I am not even the beginning, not to speak of being the end, of that which I have neither seen nor heard. Illustration is the conclusion of only such things as we perceive by natural processes. But we must understand whose is this natural process? The nature of Jīva is to exist only, whilst that of the Mother of the universe is to create, exist, and destroy. How can we, with our nature made to exist only, judge of the nature of her of whom we know neither the beginning nor the end? Illustration has not the power to move a step in a matter unheard and unseen beyond the scope of intellect."

Puzzled by this problem of the solution of questions by illustrations, Gītānjali² sings, with a sorrowful mind, as follows:

Whose sport is this? this Samsāra bound by Māyā from which there is no escape.

Who arranges this dance and clown show? Whom should I blame? Who is the author of Yoga, Viśeṣa, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Veda, and Vedānta?³ Why this Samsāra?

All are blind to the answer of this question.

The blind put forth their shoulders to lift the blind thereon that they may trample on opponents and wave the banner triumph.

These six systems of philosophy are a fearful sight.

They are mere disputations, like the rumblings of clouds,

Hence difference of opinion is likely to bring death by thunderstroke.

¹ Pravṛtti.

² A volume of verse by the author.

True it is Thy sport is eternal, and Thou playest the instrument of Māyā.

So decked like a clown we all dance. The whole is like a juggler's display.

Bands of ghosts play with dust, blind to the time Thou keepest.

From five ghosts innumerable ghosts are created.

The Samsāra is but the playground of ghosts.

But, O Mother! I ask again, It is Thou who makest the Samsāra dance,

And it dances; but what fruit dost thou reap from its dance,

That Thou should make it dance incessantly?

If Thou sayest Thou desirest no fruit, then the dance closes.

Who is it that Thou makest to dance?

It is Thyself who dances under the enchantment of Thy own Mantra,

Discrimination says all are one; or may be I am different from Thee.

Thyself am I; or I am Thine, according as it is unity or separation.

All are transient. Such is the supreme truth. Why, then, is Jīva in bonds?

The fire of the Samsāra burns the heart. Why does Jīva suffer so miserably?

When a madman dances, what interest has he to dance?

Similarly it is Thy nature to dance. There is neither beginning nor end of the dance Thou dancest.

Unceasing is Thy dance on the lotus of Mahākāla's heart.

That dance makes dance the Samsāra, and all its Jīvas in the womb of Kāla (time).

Whoever Thou mayest be, O Brahmayi! thou art the place of birth of the Brahmāṇḍa.

"I," "You," and "All" exist in Thee without whom all are blind.

The joyous dance of the Dancing Lady is in the hearts of all.

When it ceases, then Jīva ceases also.

All this, O Mother! is surely fruit of Karma. All are subject to Thy will.

Thou art full of desires to create, preserve, and destroy.

It was Thyself who existed before and exists now.

There is nothing of "I" in me.

In Thee all is born and destroyed.

That only which remains is the relation of Mother.

If in Thy aspect of Jīva Thou constantly makest Jīva dance,

Or laugh, or weep, wherein is the harm? What matters it?

Thine is the rule. Thyself art the ultimate cause.

This knowledge, too, I possess, but the mind is blind.

So, O Śyāmā! O Mother! I say mayest thou destroy Śiva Candra's

For this it was that I said that all things do not equally come within the province of illustrations. If in spite of his having (as you say) no attributes, you impute attributes to the attributeless Īśvara, and call Him Creator, why, because of the absence of attributes are you so unwilling to admit that Īśvara with form has omnipotence?

Secondly, you are unwilling to admit that a small receptacle can contain a vast number of powers. But how is it that you will admit the existence of these powers where there is no receptacle at all? Śāstra says: "He takes swiftly even without hands, moves swiftly even without feet, sees even without eyes, and hears even without ears. He knows the universe, but none know Him. It is Him whom Śāstra has called Pradhāna and Ādipuruṣa.¹ The Brahman without body and without hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can yet take, move, see, and hear. Why, then, are you astonished when told that the embodied Brahman, who has hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can take, move, see, and hear. The possibility, then, of applying the illustration that a small receptacle cannot hold a vast number of śaktis is removed to the distance of a hundred yojanas.² You will next say that if He can see and hear without eyes or ears, why should He take eyes and ears to Himself? Do you really take the śloka to mean that He has no eyes and ears, and still sees and hears? If this be so you understand it wrongly. Just consider that seeing and hearing are functions of eyes and ears. Where did He who had never eyes and ears learn to see and hear? Who will believe that there is action without acting? As a matter of fact, He has neither action nor acting. He who is the sole cause of all causes of "acting" has not to wait for "acting" Himself.

He has no eyes, ears, nor sees, nor hears. He is the embodiment of eternal knowledge, and is all consciousness. Ignorance cannot avail against Him so as to make Him lack the knowledge of anything in the universe. Even without the organs of sense, He is full of that knowledge which you and I acquire only through direct perception by means of the organs of sight, hearing, and so forth. He does not lack knowledge because of the absence of sense-organs. He knows all without seeing or hearing. Śāstra has therefore said: "He knows the universe, but none know Him." In fact, it is not the purpose of Śāstra to say that He sees even without eyes. Śāstra means that He has knowledge of all things even without seeing. For what we understand by sight is not possible without eyes. For this reason Śāstra only says at the end, "None know Him," instead of saying at each of the different parts of the śloka: "None hold Him," "None go to Him," "None see Him," "None hear Him." The sūtra consists only

¹ That is, material and efficient cause.

of that part of the śloka which says "None know Him." All other portions are merely explanatory and are required that we may understand it. Śāstra first of all taking a comprehensive view of the various forms of knowledge acquired by direct perception mentions the sense organs through which such perception is had, and then says that the knowledge which we acquire by direct perception through the organs of sense exists eternally in Him despite the absence of such organs. Therefore at the end only it is said: "None know Him."¹ The conclusion is that although He knows everybody, none know Him; or, in other words, He is the vessel of all knowledge, but none are the vessel of His knowledge. All knowledge rests in Him, and has Him as its end. This is what Śāstra means, and not that He sees even without eyes.

Thirdly, you say that eternal Śakti cannot exist in limited forms, by which you wish to say that His Śakti of seeing all things is infinite, but that the eyes of a limited body are small. It does not, however, follow from this that you have no faith in His possessing a body or eyes. On the contrary, your dissatisfaction appears to rest on the ground that the eyes I speak of are very small. You wish to see a body much bigger than that to which I refer; so big that we cannot see the whole of it from head to foot all at once. You are then a more profound believer in Īśvara's body than I am. In fact, whenever Bhagavān (or Bhagavatī) has shown His (or Her) true appearance to a devotee in order to gratify the desire of the believer in His or Her body, whenever a devotee, weeping, has eagerly prayed to see Its true appearance, then Bhagavān, who is ever merciful to devotees, has shown His universal appearance; and knowing that that appearance, boundless and of shining brilliance, is invisible to ordinary eyes, He has first granted Divine vision to the devotee, and then manifested that appearance to Him. The following occurs in the Bhagavad Gītā:

"O Supreme Lord, even as Thou describest Thyself, O best of beings, I desire to see Thy form omnipotent.

"If Thou thinkest that by me It can be seen, O Lord, Lord of Yoga, then show me Thine imperishable Self."

The Blessed Lord said: "Behold, O Pārtha! a Form of Me, a hundredfold, a thousandfold, various in kind, divine, various in colours and shapes.

"Behold the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aśvins, and also the Maruts;² behold many marvels never seen ere this, O Bhārata."

"Here, to-day behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, existing in My body, O Guḍakeśa. What else desirest thou to see?

¹ Aphorism, verse.

“But verily thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes. The Divine eye I give unto thee. Behold My Sovereign Yoga.”

Sañjaya said: “Having thus spoken, O King, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari, showed to Pārtha His supreme form as Lord.

“With many mouths and eyes, with many visions of marvel, with many Divine ornaments, with many upraised Divine weapons.

“Wearing Divine necklaces and vestures, anointed with Divine unguents, the God all-marvellous, boundless, with face turned everywhere.

“If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that might resemble the glory of that Mahātman.¹

“There Pāṇḍava beheld the whole universe, divided into manifold parts, standing in one in the body of the Deity of Deities.

“Then he, Dhanañjaya, overwhelmed with astonishment, his hair upstanding, bowed down his head to the Shining One, and with joined palms spake.”

Arjuna said:

“Within Thy Form, O God, the Gods, I see
All grades of beings with distinctive marks;
Brahmā, the Lord, upon His lotus-throne,
The Ṛṣis all, and Serpents, the Divine
With mouths, eyes, arms, breasts multitudinous,
I see Thee everywhere; unbounded Form.
Beginning, middle, end, nor source of Thee,
Infinite Lord, infinite Form, I find.”²

The following passage occurs in the discourse between Devī and Himālaya in the Bhagavatī Gītā in Mahā Bhāgavata. Himālaya said:

“Mother, although Thou art eternal (devoid of birth and death), Thou hast graciously taken birth in my house. The cause of this grace must surely be a store of religious merits accumulated in many births in consequence of which I am favoured to see Thee in this appearance of a Brahmayī daughter. (But for the fruit of austerities and devotions earned in scores of births this could not have been even with a thousand years of prayer. By the sight of this appearance of Thine all the fruit of religious merit has been exhausted. I am thus, O Mother! destitute and without claim. Formerly you were bound to show mercy to me; but now, O Mother! I am a mendicant for your mercy.) Of Thy grace show unto me now Thy appearance as Maheśvarī. (Viśveśvarī, Thou art the Īśvari of the universe—Viśva. Poor as I am, what can I do for Thee? What is there, O Mother! in my power to do? All that I am capable of

¹ Great Spirit.

² Bhagavad Gītā, chap. xi, verses 3-16. I have slightly altered Mrs. Besant's

is to offer my lasting obeisance to those beauteous lotus-feet of Thine.) I bow to Thee."

Viśveśvarī Devī said: "Father, I grant you divine vision. (With that vision) look at my appearance as Īśvara of all. Destroy all the doubts of your heart, and know Me as holding all Devas in Myself."

Śrī Mahādeva said to Nārada: "Thus granting the most excellent (knowledge of Brahman) to the King of mountains who made obeisance, Devī then showed him Her divine Maheśvara aspect effulgent with the brilliance of ten million moons; bearing on His head, with its clusters of matted hair, the beautiful crescent moon; holding in His left hand a trident, and with the right bestowing blessings, yet awesome and terrible to see." Himālaya was struck with wonder, and (with a heart fearful and unsatisfied) said again:

"Mother, show me another aspect of Thine." Thereupon, O great Muni! the Devī, eternal and of universal form, withdrew that appearance of Hers and showed another.

This next was beautiful as the moon in autumn. The head bore a beautiful crown, and the four hands were adorned with a conch-shell, discus, mace, and lotus.¹ The form was brilliant, with three lustrous eyes, clad with celestial garments, hung with celestial garlands, anointed with celestial perfumes, and its fair lotus feet were adored by great yogis. The King of mountains saw that from all sides of this vast² body innumerable arms were extended, and innumerable feet were displayed, and that faces with opened eyes were all over its body. The sight of this supreme excellent appearance, replete with the qualities of Īśvara, filled the Great Mountain with wonder. Prostrating himself at the lotus feet of his daughter Brahmayā, Himālaya said:

"Mother, the sight of this supreme and excellent appearance of Thine, replete with the qualities of Īśvara, has filled me with wonder. Again I pray Thee show me another aspect of Thine. O Highest Īśvara, for him who possesses Thee none in this world can grieve. He is truly blessed. (There is no one in this world who has not a want of some sort, but, O Mother! what want can he have who possesses Thee; whose self is merged in Thy vast Self; whose littleness has by its force compelled Thee to abandon Thy greatness, and to attach Thyself to the heart of Thy devotee; whose force has compelled the Īśvara of all to supplicate the supplicant, the Kālikā maintainer of the universe entreating the devotee that he may be satisfied; and has even compelled, O Mother! the mother of the three worlds, to incarnate as daughter. A want must exist in relation to something, but, O Mother! where Thou existeth such

¹ Śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma of Viṣṇu

a want can never exist. Thou art the Śakti in all things good or bad, lifeless or living, in the world. So I say, O Mother; he who possesses Thee of universal form can, because of Thee, have no want, not merely in this universe alone, but even in untold millions of universes. People grieve for him alone who is destitute. But who will grieve for him who holds Thee? who holdest all things in Thyself? Sinking in Thy existence Jīva is beyond all want and its satisfaction. Though he be the meanest and poorest of men in the saṁsāra, he is by Thy grace a King of Kings. None therefore grieve for him. All rather envy him, and being unable to emulate him speak of him as a man thrice blessed. O Mother! by Thy grace favour me; even after receiving such grace I again seek grace, for how else shall I dare to look at the true appearance of Her whose appearances are numberless?) Knowing that I shall receive this grace, I say, O merciful Mother! obeisance to Thy feet for evermore."

After seeing many other forms of his daughter, Himālaya, at the end of the hymn, says: "Mother, who is there, Deva or human being, in the three worlds capable of fully describing this universe, which is Thy appearance, or Thy qualities, even by the effort of many ages? (Devī, Thy true aspect is unapproachable by even Brahmā and the other Devas.) What can one of small intelligence like myself say of it? What I have to say, O Mother! is this: If Thou hast mercy for me, by Thy grace, charm me not by Thy great māyā. I have nothing else to say to Thee. O Mother! Īśvarī of the universe, I bow to Thee."

Oh, thou advocate of formlessness, after witnessing all this vast play full of forms and attributes as described in the Śāstra, do you still grieve at the smallness of His appearance? Wheresoever you will look you will see innumerable eyes, innumerable feet, innumerable hands, innumerable heads, which even infinite space is unable to contain. What more eternal sports of eternity do you wish to see? Even Arjuna, conqueror of the three worlds, was tormented with fear at the sight of the terrible Kāla-aspect of Bhagavān, and, weeping, said:

"Radiant, Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued,
With opened mouths and shining vast-orbed eyes,
My inmost self is quaking, having seen,
My strength is withered, Viṣṇu, and my peace.
Like Time's destroying flames: I see Thy teeth,
Upstanding, spread within expanded jaws;
Nought know I anywhere, no shelter find.
Mercy, O God! refuge of all the worlds."¹

(Formerly I thought that you were a Deva, now I know that you are Deveṣa, Lord of Devas. Formerly I thought that Thy abode was in the universe. Now I know that the universe is in Thee: So I say, O Lord! the conclusions at which I, a Jīva, have arrived are false. Be now pleased with Thy natural graciousness to grant me power to see Thy true aspect.)

Sādhaka, do you still believe that you and I have the courage to look upon that appearance? Does this enormous power which shatters the Brahmāṇḍa and destroys all the regions bespeak, in your opinion, but a small śakti? The quantity of water which the sea holds is not small, but the jars which you and I possess are small. The Śaktis and Vibhūti¹ in the body of Bhagavān are unlimited and eternal, but neither your nor my brain can contain them. The smallness of the quantity of water in our jar makes us, when sitting in our houses, think that the endless sea is small when in truth it is not. In case you should say that a perfect display of Īśvara's Śakti was not proved by the fact that it overpowered the weak human heart of Arjuna, frightened at the prospect of kith and kin, I will cite another example. It is true that Arjuna, in his play as a human being,² was already afraid of committing an unrighteous act. That fear was the fear of a Jīva, but He who is above both righteousness and unrighteousness, and is ever feared by Indra, Yama, Candṛa, and Sūrya, is afraid of nothing. The heart of the almighty Supreme Puruṣa, higher than the highest, who alone among the Devas is the vanquisher of death, whose name, Parameśvara, is the true epithet of His real self, who after he has destroyed the Brahmāṇḍa³ at the time of the great dissolution,⁴ Himself exists for ever as Pūrṇa Brahman;⁵ Mahākāla, unwasting, untouched by time, immortal, is neither weak nor afraid of anything. Yet, notice how He, too, once trembled with fear and was beyond Himself when He could not find a path of escape.

When Mahādeva refused Jagadambā permission to attend Dakṣa's sacrifice,⁶ even though She repeatedly besought it, the daughter of Dakṣa,⁷ who is eternal perfect Brahman, seeing that Bhagavān was influenced by a husband's vanity,⁸ assumed a terrible aspect, with the object of shattering that vanity. Śāstra gives the following account of this in Mahā Bhāgavata. Śrī Mahādeva said:

¹ Manifestations.

² Arjuna was an incarnation of the Ṛṣi Nara.

³ The egg of Brahman, or universe.

⁴ Mahāpralaya.

⁵ Perfect or complete Brahman.

⁶ Yajña.

⁷ That is, the Devī (Jagadambā) in Her incarnation as Satī, wife of Śiva.

⁸ Thinking himself superior to his wife: as appears from the text a very

When thus spoken to by Maheśvara, Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, with eyes reddened with anger, pondered for a moment. Śaṅkara¹ has obtained me as His wife (by virtue of My own gift) after long prayer and severe austerities;² yet to-day He slights and speaks harshly to Me (though in the play of incarnation He is my husband, I shall forsake this proud Mahādeva, as also My father, the arrogant Prajāpati, and in My own play live for some time in My own abode, the region of Kaivalya). Later on, being begged (and entreated in severe sādhana) by this Maheśvara, I shall reappear as Himālaya's daughter, and become Śambhu's wife. Pondering thus in Her mind for a moment, the daughter of Dakṣa opened Her three fearful eyes, and overpowered Śaṅkara with illusion.³ Śambhu stood still at the sight of the Devī, with Her lips parted in anger and eyes shining like destructive fire. On being thus looked at by the frightened Maheśvara, the Devī suddenly displayed the terrible teeth in Her terrible mouth and laughed aloud. On hearing that frightful sound of laughter, Mahādeva was paralyzed with fright. Opening His three eyes with great effort He saw (but once) the world terrifying aspect of Jagadambā. When He looked upon Her, Her body immediately lost its golden colour, and took on that of a dark mass of crushed eye-paint.⁴ She appeared naked as space, with dishevelled hair, with a lolling tongue, and four arms. She was languorous with desire,⁵ terribly furious, bathed in sweat (caused by her anger), and of frightful countenance; garlanded with skulls, bearing on Her head a brilliant crown and a crescent moon, shining like ten million suns. Her voice thundered loudly.

In such a fearful aspect Satī, dazzling by the mass of her own brilliant energy,⁶ stood before Mahādeva, and uttered loud peals of laughter. Seeing the wonderful appearance of the Devī, Mahādeva lost all self-control, and, bewildered with fright, sought to flee in all directions. Seeing the Lord of Kailāsa thus overcome by fear, the daughter of Dakṣa again uttered peal after peal of dreadful laughter, and, with the object of reassuring Him, shouted: "Fear not! fear not!" Hearing this cry and the fierce peals of laughter, Mahādeva was so bewildered with terror that He frantically rushed again in flight in every direction. Seeing her husband so overcome with fear Parameśvarī was moved to pity, and with a view to restrain Him stood for a moment before Him at each of the ten quarters of the Heaven in the form of the ten Mahāvidyās. In whatever direction He ran with haste He thus saw a fearful form standing before Him. In fright He fled in another direction, only to be again confronted by another such form. After having thus run towards each of the ten quarters of the Heaven He saw that there was none without danger for

¹ Śiva.² Tapasyā.³ Moha.

Him. Then, feeling altogether helpless, He sat down on earth and shut His three eyes, and (a moment later as through an inner fear) he opened them. He saw before Him Śyāmā. Her smiling face was like a full-blown lotus. Her breasts were large. Her eyes wide and terrible, and Her hair dishevelled. She was four-armed, naked as space, shining with the light of ten million suns (although black in colour like a fresh cloud), and stood facing the south, the heavenly form of Dakṣiṇā. Seeing Her thus (of a strange form full of an uncommon beauty), Śambhu, as if in great fear, asked: "Who art Thou, Śyāmā? ¹ Where has Satī, my beloved, gone?"

Devī said: "Mahādeva, I am Thy Satī here standing before Thee, and yet Thou dost not recognize Me! Why is Thy mind so confused to-day? Do I appear to Thee different from Thy Satī?"

Śiva said: "If Thou really art my beloved Satī, daughter of Dakṣa, why hast Thou become black and fearful? Who are these forms of terrible aspect standing in all directions around Me? Amongst these which art Thou? Tell me everything, for these wonderful forms have made Me greatly afraid."

Satī said: "I am the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mahāprakṛti who creates and destroys. Owing to the promise I had aforetime given Thee (to bless Thee for Thy tapasyā) I (put my true form under restraint, and) incarnated as a fair girl in Dakṣa's house merely to get Thee as My husband (to charm Thee by becoming Thy wife). I have to-day assumed this fearful aspect for the destruction of father Dakṣa's great yajña. But, O Maheśvara! Thou hast no reason to be afraid of Me (for this fearful aspect is assumed to terrify Dakṣa alone). The ten terrible forms which Thou seest in each of the ten directions are each of them My aspect. Oh, Śambhu! Thou possessest immense wisdom. Be not afraid (but see with Thy eye of wisdom). Thou art My most beloved husband, and I am Thy wife. Seeing Thee so greatly afraid and turning in all directions, I stood before Thee blocking them by these ten forms of Mine."

Śiva said: "Thou art the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mūlaprakṛti who creates, preserves, and destroys. It is not possible that one should know Thee who art beyond the reach of speech and mind, so, not knowing Thee through great illusion, I have said unpleasant words to Thee. Pardon me, O Parameśvarī, the offence which I have thus committed. Tell me, O Consort of Śiva with fearful eyes, the names of each of these ten most dreadful forms of Thine standing in each of the ten quarters."

Devī said: "O Mahādeva, these Mahāvidyās are but different aspects of My own Self. Listen! Their names are Kālī, Tārā, Śoḍaśī,

Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Sundarī,¹ Bagalāmukhī, Dhumāvatī, and Mātangī.”

Śiva said: “O Devī! who supporteth the universe, if Thou art pleased with me, tell me which of these forms bear these respective names.”

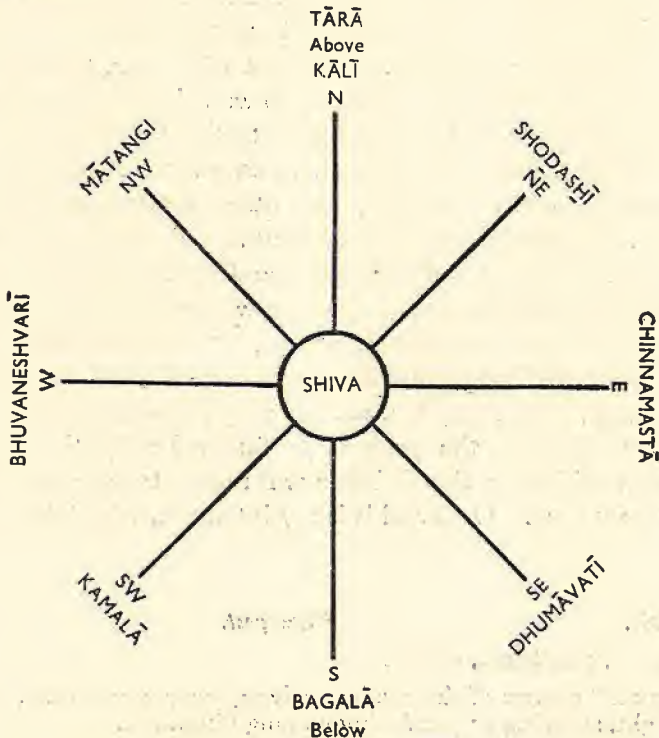
Devi said: “The dark-coloured form, with terrible eyes, which Thou dost see before Thee is Kālī. She who is above Thee of Śyāma² colour is Mahāvidyā Tārā, the very image of Mahākālā. The lean, destitute and very frightful Devī whom Thou dost see on Thy right side is, O high-souled Mahādeva, Mahāvidyā Chhinnamastā. O Śambhu, the Devī on Thy left side is Bhuvaneśvarī. She who is behind you is Devī Bagalāmukhī, Destructress of foes. She who appears as a widow on the south-east is Devī Mahāvidyā Dhumāvatī, a great Īśvarī. The Devī on the south-west is Tripurasundarī.³ In the north-west is Mātangī, and in the north-east Mahāvidyā Śoḍaśī, a great Īśvarī. She who is below Thee is Bhairavī.⁴ O Śambhu! be not afraid (at the sight of these ten forms,

¹ Kamalā or Mahālaksmī.

² Grass green, dark blue, blackish.

³ Kamalā.

⁴ See Daśa-Mahāvidyā-Upāsanā-Rahasya, by Prasanna Kumāra Śāstrī, which illustrates both the figures and yantras. The text also illustrates the positions as follows:



which are My manifestations, and destroy the fear of existence.) Of My many forms (ninety millions of manifestations)¹ these ten are the best (the most perfect vibhūtis).² To such Sādhakas as worship them with devotion they grant the four-fold fruit³ and all that is desired, O Maheśvara! all such things as Sādhakas desire, such as Māraṇa, Uccāṭana, Kṣobana, Mohana, Drāvana, Stambhana,⁴ Vidveśana, are granted by them. Each of these ten Mahāvidyās is to be kept secret and never revealed. Thou shalt be the ordiner and interpreter of yantras, mantras, pūjā, homa, puraścaraṇa,⁵ stotra,⁶ kavaca⁷ practices, rules, and all else concerning them which may be required by Sādhakas. There is none else in the world who can reveal them. The Āgama Śāstra which Thou shalt reveal from Thy mouth will be renowned in the three worlds. O Śaṅkara! Āgama and Veda are my two arms. With them I support the entire universe of moving and unmoving things. The world is maintained by Dharma, as ordained in Tantra and Veda. The fool who disregards them through delusion falls assuredly from the arms which save the three worlds. I am unable to save him who, in disregard of Āgama or Veda, worships Me in a manner different from that ordained in it. This is nothing but the strictest truth. Āgama and Veda are both causes of liberation. But both are difficult to understand and carry out. Knowledge of them is hard to attain even by intelligent men. They are eternal and without end. The intelligent will know that the purpose of both the Śāstras is the same, and will practise dharma accordingly. The wise will never, through delusion, consider them to be different. Those who worship these ten Mahāvidyās will act like Vaiṣṇavas, but in rapt concentration will rest their hearts on Me. The Sādhaka will with great care keep secret, and never speak to others of mantra, yantra, kavaca, and other matters which he receives from his guru. If these things are given out siddhi will be unattained and evil will result. A good Sādhaka will therefore conceal them with every care. High-souled Mahādeva, I have now spoken to you of the subject of worship. (Let not the sight of these aspects of Mine strike terror into Thy heart, and make Thee doubt My single-minded love for Thee. I am Thy beloved wife, and Thou, too, art My very beloved husband. To-day I wish only to humble the pride of my father, Prajāpati. So I pray to Thee, O Deva of Devas, that if Thou will not go to the place of sacrifice permit Me so to go. O Deva! it is my intention, with Thy permission,

¹ Vibhūtis.

² See *post*.

³ Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa.

⁴ "Magical" powers of destruction, driving away, perturbing, enchanting, putting to flight, stopping or paralyzing causing dissension.

to go and destroy the sacrifice ¹ of My father, Prajāpati Dakṣa (and not to frighten Thee)."

Mahādeva said to Nārada: "Hearing these words of Devī, Śambhu stood as one struck with intense fear, and then spoke as follows to the fierce-eyed Kālī."

Śiva said: "Devī, I know that Thou art Parameśvarī, the best, perfect, and supreme Prakṛti. Pardon me the unbecoming words which, overpowered by delusion, I have in forgetfulness used towards Thee. Thou art the primal ² supreme Vidyā ³ who existeth in all created things. Thou art independent and supreme. Thou art Śakti. Who is there to order Thee to do or to desist from doing anything? O Śivē ⁴ if Thou goest to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice, what power have I to restrain that? And why should I dare to do so? O Maheśvarī, pardon me for what (presuming on my position as Thy husband) I have, under the influence of intense delusion, said to Thee. Do Thou as it pleases Thee." ⁵

Interpreter of Śāstras, do you consider that that display of power is of no account, at the sight of which even Mahārudra, who causes the great dissolution, was astounded, trembled with fear, and sought to flee?

When Niśumbha was killed in the battle with the Devī, ⁶ Śumbha, seeing Brāhmaṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Maheśvarī, Indrāṇī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṅhī, Cāmuṇḍī, Kauśikī, and Śivadūti, ⁷ fighting with fury, sarcastically addressed Her who rejoices in war, saying:

¹ Because Dakṣa had, to offer him a slight, purposely neglected to invite Śiva, Her husband.

² Ādyā.

³ As opposed to Avidyā, though She is both.

⁴ The Devī as wife of Śiva.

⁵ Satī then went to the sacrifice (yajna). There, Dakṣa poured invectives on the head of Śiva. Satī's great devotion to Her husband (the Hindu girl prays that she may become like Satī and get a husband like Śiva) could not bear to hear Dakṣa's abuse of Him, and She gave up Her life. Nandi hastened to Kaiāśa and told Śiva, who rose in terrible wrath. Fire flashed from His eye and took the fearful form of Bhairava, who went with a host of ghosts and goblins to destroy the yajña. Śiva followed. The yajña was destroyed. Nandi, Śiva's follower cut off Dakṣa's head and threw it into the fire. Śiva then took up the dead body of Satī and went away bearing it on His shoulder. The story continues with the history of the Mahāpīṭhas. Satī reappeared in Her incarnation as daughter of the Mountain-king. The story of the Dakṣa-yajña is one of the most ancient, as it is one of the best known, of all Śiva and Śakti legends.

⁶ The brothers Niśumbha and Śumbha were Lords of the Demonic Dānavas, who had defeated the Devas. The Devī, however, in whose body was the united Śakti of all the Devas, slew first Dhūmrālocana, Caṇḍa, and Muṇḍa, who had been sent against Her, and then the great Dānava Raktabīja, and finally both Śumbha and Niśumbha (see Caṇḍī of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa).

“O Durgā, proud of the strength of Thy arms, be no longer proud. She who fights with the help of the powers of other Devas has no reason to pride Herself so much as the single-handed conqueror of the three worlds.”¹

She who dwells in all hearts and who ever leans to mercy showed it then without stint. In that field of battle she made Śumbha a reply unheard of even by great yogīs who had attained siddhi and become pure and free of the bonds of life. Jagadambā knew that the King of the Daityas was moved in his actions by an ill-directed intelligence and a naturally wicked nature. Thus, just as a mother cannot forsake her son even if he commits hundreds and thousands of offences against her, but rather with smile and joy takes him on her lap, and then with feigned anger calls him wicked, so the Mother of the universe, looking upon Śumbha with merciful eyes but with such a feigned anger, said: “Wicked one, I alone exist. Who other is there in the world? Look! All these manifestations² will enter into Me. I will then dispel the doubt which has arisen in your mind at the sight of a number of Devaśaktis.” (The mother, as if caressingly, said: “Wicked one, you see these Devaśaktis, and now by a trick wish to know the truth concerning them.”) Then in an instant, at the will of Her who is all will Herself, Brāhmaṇī and all other Devīs entered into Brahmamayī’s body, and (Śumbha saw that in the battle-field) there was none but Ambikā alone.

Then Devī again said: “I withdraw the many forms in which I (displaying My wealth of manifestation)² appeared. I now alone stand in the battle-field. So, Śumbha, now desist.”

It was as if a boy on seeing many mothers was disconsolate on being unable to recognize his own. The Mother therefore showed him Her real self, and consoled him, saying: “Look, I am thy Mother, so be quiet.” But Śumbha was not one to be satisfied with knowing what She was, without letting Her know what he was, so putting on the arms and accoutrements of the hero, the hero son of the heroine Mother advanced to heroic struggle. O Mother! he who runs to your arms with his own strength is not a mendicant for your mercy. So the music of war rang out, fiercely shaking heaven, earth, and the nether world, and the ever-triumphant Lord of Daityas stood in hand-to-hand conflict, to the sound of victory-giving shouts from this and other worlds.

Śāstra says that when, wounded in the heart by the Devī’s spear he fell dead and dropped from the sky to earth, the latter, with its seven principal mountain ranges,³ seven seas, and seven islands, shook with the

¹ That is, Śumbha himself.

² Vibhūti, see *post*.

unbearable weight of his body. At his death all the regions rejoiced. The whole world regained health. The sky, hitherto overcast with a deep mist, cleared. Inauspicious clouds which had been shooting meteors all around, disappeared. Rivers, the flow of which had long been stayed by the din of the twang of his bow and his thundering shouts, became on his destruction again free, and moved along their channels. The hearts of Devas were filled with immeasurable joy. Gandharvas¹ commenced to sing in sweet tones. Kinnaras, Siddhas, and Sādhya² began to play on musical instruments. Apsaras³ commenced to dance. Pure air again flowed; the sun at length assumed his natural radiance. Fires could at last burn quietly, and without making the heavens resound with the sound of their burning.

Sādhaka! whose power can compare with the power of him for whose sake the ordained course of Nature was arrested? Is it not a sign of the shortness of our life, intelligence, good fortune, and sādhana that we presume to deem small the power of manifestation⁴ of Her whose great māyā charmed even the great charmer Śumbha, ruler over the three worlds? Can you say that the Śakti is small of Her who can make the impossible possible, whose māyā made even Bhagavān Rāmacandra forgetful of himself upon the occasion of the destruction of the hundred-headed Rāvaṇa?⁵ Does not Her play in Her incarnations as a fish, tortoise, and boar, whereby She saved the Vedas, supported the universe, and held the earth on the end of the boar's tusk, bear evidence of a full display of divine Śakti?⁶ The sudden appearance, bursting through a crystal pillar, of the strange half-man, half-lion, in order to save Prahlāda, chief among devotees;⁷ the display of the Brahmāṇḍa within Her mouth to mother Yaśodā;⁸ the destruction of Pūṭana by sucking milk from her breasts;⁹

¹ Celestial beings (Devayonis) who, according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, were sons of Brahmā, "born imbibing melody"; celestial musicians and choristers who play and sing at the banquets of the Devas; belonging together with the Apsaras—their wives—to Indra's heaven.

² Other classes of Devayonis.

³ Beautiful and voluptuous Devayonis of Indra's Heaven; wives of the Gandharvas; produced at the churning of the ocean.

⁴ Vibhūti.

⁵ When Rāma was returning from Laṅkā, he met the hundred-headed Rāvaṇa. On seeing him, forgetful that he was Bhagavān, Rāma did not dare to fight.

⁶ Various incarnations of Viṣṇu.

⁷ The Nṛsimha Avatāra of Viṣṇu.

⁸ Yaśodā was wife of Nanda, in whose home Kṛṣṇa was brought up. The infant Kṛṣṇa showed to Yaśodā the universe in His mouth.

⁹ Pūṭana was a female demon (Rākṣaṣī) with poisoned breast, sent by Kamsa to destroy the infant Kṛṣṇa, who, however, destroyed her by sucking her

the upholding of Mount Govardhana by a boy of seven¹; the charming, unknown to the three worlds of Brahmā through one whole year, by the raising of calves, cows, and cowherds by māyā²; the humbling of the pride of Kandarpa³ by the assumption, in playful favour to devotees, of thousands of forms in early youth for the gratification of herdswomen who were maddened with love, and had attained siddhi by the practice of tapas for many ages⁴; the showing of the virāt⁵ aspect to Akūrā⁶ in the waters of the Yamunā⁷—all these are doubtless not perfect manifestations so far as the perfect Brahman is concerned, yet, O man, I ask you, can you imagine even in dream anything greater than these? The world of Jīvas could (were it to desire it) obtain even greater things of Him. But there are none who have the capacity to entertain such a desire.

“Manifest Thy divine Śakti to such an extent.” It is beyond the power of Jīva to measure His greatness by saying “to such an extent”. For this reason the extent to which He has manifested His Śakti for the removal of the burden of the earth in consequence of the tapasyā performed by the devotees is sufficient for Jīvas. So I say, Do not trouble yourself with the thought that the receptacle is small. It is not really so; it assumes a small form to serve the extremely small purposes of the small world. You and I, the small Jīvas of this small world, do not count even as much as the smallest atom in His view. What right have we to see His universal aspect, which is rarely seen by Brahmā and other Devas? Secondly, the Lord of the universe has no need to show that sort of lordliness which you and I show to others with greatness, largeness and the like. What avails our ignoring of His lordliness when even Śumbha, Niśumbha, Rāvaṇa, and Kumbhakarṇa,⁸ could avail nothing by their ignoring it? So I say that when the greatly powerful King, Bali, could not save himself by looking on Vāmanadeva⁹ as really a dwarf, why do we, who are really dwarfs, stretch out our arms to catch the moon shining in the firmament of the devotee’s heart? As you use the illustration of water to show that a small receptacle cannot contain a vast śakti so I will take that of fire to show that an immeasurable śakti can be eternally hidden even

¹ By Kṛṣṇa.

² Brahmā stole the calves and cowherds of Gokula in order to test Kṛṣṇa’s power. The latter assumed the forms of the stolen cows and cowherds, so their absence was not noticed. This lasted for one year, when the calves and cowherds were restored by Brahmā, and Kṛṣṇa withdrew his māyā.

³ Deva of love. The reference here is to the Rāsaliḷā.

⁴ That is, the Gopīs.

⁵ Universal.

⁶ Uncle of Kṛṣṇa, who induced Rāma and Kṛṣṇa to go to Mathura and kill Kamsa.

⁷ River Yamunā.

⁸ Daityas and Rākṣasas. The last was brother of Rāvaṇa.

in a small receptacle. Put a spark of fire on a mountain heap of grass, and you will see that spark will extend throughout it and will illumine every side with enormous tongues of flame, kissing the cheeks of the firmament. The spark is no longer a spark, but has become a destructive fire flaming terrifically and fit to consume the whole heap. Similarly, however small Bhagavān's appearance in His incarnation may seem to you to be, bring to it a substance fit for the display of divine manifestation¹ and you will see that the Brahmāṇḍa is filled with the eternal Brahma-play of Śakti and has become the field for the display of Śakti such as the Nṛsiṃha of Prahlāda,² Śrīkṛṣṇa of Arjuna, Gopāla³ of Yaśodā, Śyāmasundara⁴ of the herdswomen,⁵ Nandanandana of Akrūra,⁶ Śyāmā of Śumbha,⁷ Umā of Himālaya,⁸ Sītā of Rāma,⁹ and Satī of Śiva.¹⁰ You will then realize that His greatness is not small, but that the Jīva's capacity is small; His appearance is not small, but the eyes of Jīva are so. He is not small, but you and I are so. So I say, O Sādhaka, do not suppose that a small receptacle cannot hold the eternal Śakti, or proceed to measure the greatness of Mahāmāyā, whose power can make that possible which seems impossible.

But while there is yet time, seek the protection of Her feet, and opening the door of your heart say: "Mother, all my intelligence, learning, and reasoning are at an end. Now be gracious to me. In my struggle with doubt stand before me as Thou didst stand before Arjuna and before Śumbha. Fill the world for once with Thy true appearance so that my birth may be blessed, my life may be blessed, my eyes may be blessed, and I, O Mother, may sink in Thee, becoming wholly Thine."

¹ Vibhūti.

² The man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu for the protection of the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu.

³ One of Kṛṣṇa's 108 names. That by which he was called by Yaśodā.

⁴ The name by which Kṛṣṇa was called by the Gopīs.

⁵ Gopīs of Vraja who loved Kṛṣṇa.

⁶ Name of Kṛṣṇa; as to Akrūra, see *post*.

⁷ The Devī Victrix of the demon Śumbha (see *post*).

⁸ The Devī as daughter of Himālaya and wife of Śiva. As to the derivation of the name see the first canto of Kālidāsa's Kumāra-sambhavam. Umā unmarried, is the śakti of will, as the Sūtra says, "Ichhāśakti umā kumārī."

⁹ Wife of Rāma.

¹⁰ Devī, wife of Śiva and daughter of Dakṣa.

CHAPTER VI

WORSHIP OF DEVATĀS

SĀDHAKA, against our wish we are obliged to say again that the healers of whom we have spoken are wont to quote four sayings from the Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra as evidence in favour of their views. Though these statements are supposed to be evidence on their behalf, we shall, in order to show what this evidence is, quote the entire text consisting of the Devī's questions and the answer of Sadāśiva. From these texts the right thinking will readily understand how difficult it is to become a healer without killing thousands.¹

In the fourteenth Ullāsa of this Tantra,² after Mahādeva had spoken of the rules and ritual relating to the consecration of the images of Devas, Devī said:

"Lord, tell me truly what devotees should do if, for some unforeseen reason, the consecrated image of a Devatā is left without worship. Tell me also through what faults images of Devas become unfit for worship, for what faults they should be rejected, and what means exist for remedying those faults."

Sadāśiva said:

"If there be an omission to worship for a day, then the worship should be twice performed; if for two days, then the worship should be four times performed; if for three days it should be celebrated eight times. If the omission does not exceed six months then the Deva should be bathed with eight jars full of water, sanctified by His mantra, and then worshipped. If the omission to perform worship exceeds six months, then the image should again be consecrated and then worshipped. If the image of a Deva is defective, cracks, or breaks, it should be consigned to water. If it has fallen on unholy ground it should not be worshipped. A defective, cracked, or broken image should be consigned to water, but an image polluted by touch should be purified and then again worshipped.

¹ That is to say, without having had experience at the cost of others.

Mahāpīṭhas¹ and Anādilingas² are free from all faults—that is to say, the above-mentioned causes do not operate on them to detract from their virtue. For this reason the people should worship their own Iṣṭadevas³ in them for the attainment of their desired blessings.⁴ Mahāmāya, I have thus related to you in detail all that you wished to know for the good of men who act with a view to the fruits of action.”⁵

As He thus spoke the eye in the forehead of Bhagavān Mahākāla opened as if to peer into futurity.

Nowadays one meets with many an adept in Tattva,⁶ who professes to have renounced action, and says at every opportunity: “The karma-kāṇḍa⁷ is intended only for those who are devoid of knowledge; why then should he who has attained to it do action?”

Unfortunately, most of those who say this are themselves doers of karma.⁸ What they therefore say must mean that such karma alone as consists in the worship of Devas is for those who are devoid of true knowledge; while such karma as is required for the service of wife, children, and the like may be done even by those possessed of true knowledge. For their Śāstra says: “It is also by doing what pleases Him that He is worshipped.” However that may be, it was as if He thought of what would happen in the future that Bhagavān, who dwells in the hearts of all wise men, said⁹: No Jīva possessing body can be without karma for even half a minute. Helpless he is drawn by the current of karma even against his will. That is to say, just as everything follows the wind, which it is unable to check, so everyone follows the irresistible flow of karma. By karma¹⁰ alone Jīva enjoys happiness, by karma alone he suffers misery. Under the influence of karma alone he is born, lives, and dies. For this reason I have made mention of various kinds of karma in

¹ Holy shrines where the body of Devī as Satī fell to earth (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

² Anādi, without beginning. That is, those lingams which spring from earth supernaturally (called Svāyambhū, or self-existent), as distinguished from those fashioned and installed by men. Of the former class are the lingams at Vaidyanātha, Tārakeśvara, the Candraśekhara at Chittagong and other places.

³ The worshipper's own chosen Deity.

⁴ Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa.

⁵ That is, those on the path of pravṛtti, who act interestedly (sakāma karma), as opposed to those who renounce, and who act rightly and unselfishly without thought of gaining fruit of their action (niṣkāma karma).

⁶ Sacred science.

⁷ The portion of the scripture which relates to worship, ritual practice (karma), which last word means that which is done, action.

⁸ See *post*.

⁹ Verse 104 *et seq.* of chap. xiv of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.

sādhana-yoga, in order to attract the minds of those of little knowledge to nirvāṇa-dharma¹—that is to say, in order to induce them to work until they reach the stage which follows nirvikalpa samādhi,² and to keep them away from wrong action (that is to say, if the mind remains ever engaged in the thought of good things, no bad thoughts can germinate in it)."

Sadāśiva next proceeded to explain the subject of karma with more explicitness³: "Karma is of two kinds, auspicious and inauspicious. Through the latter Jīva suffers acute pain and, O Devī! through the former Jīva becomes attached to the fruits of action, and controlled by the bonds of karma, sojourns again and again in this world and the next." That is to say, you must correct your notion of a twofold bond of karma to the effect that karma consisting of worship of Devas and Devīs is the cause of bondage, whilst that done in the service of the world removes bondage; and you must understand that whatever you do is karma, that what is good karma is auspicious, and what is bad karma is inauspicious, and that both auspicious and inauspicious karma are instrumental in causing the bondage of Jīva to saṃsāra.

"Not even in a hundred kalpas⁴ can Jīva attain liberation unless both his auspicious as well as inauspicious karma come to an end"—that is to say, as good karma will come to an end so will bad karma come to an end with it; otherwise, if all your good karma pass away, leaving the flow of your bad karma the same or gradually increasing, such a destruction of karma will not remove bondage to saṃsāra. Rather the want of good karma will break the tie with Heaven and make that with Hell yet firmer still through the influence of bad karma. "As it makes no difference to the binding power of a chain whether it be of iron or gold, so karma, whether auspicious or inauspicious, is equally powerful to bind Jīva."⁵ Accumulated karma, whether good or bad, inevitably acts so as to bring the Jīva back to saṃsāra. "Jīva, even though he be in constant action and endure hundreds of austerities, cannot attain liberation so long as he does not acquire true knowledge"⁶—that is to say, if knowledge is not sought as the accompaniment of action the latter alone can never be directly instrumental to secure liberation. "It is only after the destruction of sin and the purification of the heart by thought upon Tattva (the thought that Brahman alone in an essential sense exists, while the world does not—that is to say, that the world is nothing but a display⁷ of the Brahman) and by performance of

¹ That is, to the path which leads to liberation.

² See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 107.

⁴ See *post*.

⁵ Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chapter xiv, verses 109, 110.

⁶ Ibid. 111.

⁷ Ibid. 112.

disinterested action¹ that knowledge dawns²”—that is to say, that knowledge only appears when the mind has been so purified by the practice of Brahma-Tattva and constant worship of Bhagavān with karma performed without desire for fruit, that no sinful propensity arises in it, but only the presence of the pure sattva guṇa is felt without the least appearance of the rajas and tamas guṇas.

“From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā. Parabrahman alone is the sole truly existent one. When knowledge of this tattva is gained then the Jīva attains true happiness³”—that is to say, whatever variety we see in the dualistic world, is like a dream or a magic show, the creation of māyā. Just as the magician alone truly exists and all which he does is illusion, so the nondual Parabrahman alone is true and all the things raised by Him to form the saṁsāra are illusive. Just as when sleep is dispelled all dreams disappear, so, when, by the grace of Bhagavān, the sleep of māyā is dispelled, this saṁsāra, full of māyā, disappears at the same time. As when Jīva awakes he sees that he alone and neither sleep nor dream remains, so when Jīva becomes self-conscious he sees that neither māyā nor the saṁsāra remains, but only he himself as the Supreme Spirit.⁴ It is only when Jīva thus sinks into the sea of Tattva⁵ that he gains such happiness as never gives place to sorrow.

“He alone is free from the bonds of karma who, renouncing name and form, has attained to the knowledge that on the immutable Brahman all things⁶ rest.”⁷ One must rise above name and form and make all things⁶ rest in the true immutable Brahman. From this it must be understood that if Brahman is true and immutable, names and forms are false and mutable. What is true is stable and what is false is unstable, so that to reach the true the false must be abandoned. To sink in Brahmatattva, which is above māyā, names and forms which are made of māyā must be abandoned. By name and form we must understand not true name and form, but the name and form which arises from change of nature.⁸ For instance, the true name of earth is earth. Its form is the ordinary ground. When, however, cups, jugs, pots, dishes, and other like things,

¹ That is, niṣkāma karma (opposed to sakāma karma), or right action done unselfishly without hope of reward and simply because such action is right.

² Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 112.

³ *Ibid.*, verse 113. Brahmā is the first Deva of the Trinity, a transitory manifestation of the supreme Brahman.

⁴ Paramātmā.

⁵ Here the infinite waters of the ocean of Brahman.

⁶ *Lit.* “all Tattva rest.”

⁷ Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, *ibid.*, verse 114.

⁸ Vikāra: change of form or nature; transformation; deviation from natural state. In Sāṅkhya, Vikṛti is that which is evolved from a previous source or

are made of it, the names and forms of those articles are due to nothing but change—that is to say, had not the true form of earth been transformed into the changed forms of cups, and the like, the substance earth would never have received the names of cups, jars, and the like. When these break and return to the form of common earth those names also disappear along with those forms. Cups, jars, and the like, are all false; earth alone is true. Just as in understanding the nature¹ of earth I cannot leave out of consideration cups, and the like, so in directing the mind to the nature¹ of Brahma I must not omit to consider the Brahmanāṇḍa consisting of names and forms. It was earth before the formation of cups, and subsequently it again became earth. Only for a short time between these two states the cry of “Cup, cup!” arose, which alone is to be considered false. Śāstra has therefore said: “If a thing which did not exist either before or afterwards appears to exist during a middle period, know it also to be false.” This falsehood, again, is not fundamentally false. A thing seen in a dream may be false, but neither dream nor sleep is false. Similarly, this world may be false, but the māyā at its root never false. If sleep be false, who shows the dream? If māyā be false, who creates the saṃsāra? If māyā be false, then the saṃsāra becomes true. Māyā, therefore, exists and will exist, and it is through this māyā that mother Mahāmāyā must be seen.

Gītānjali² therefore sings:

“Veda says: vain is our effort, for everything,

O Brother! is Māyā.

Tantra says through Māyā is heard the laugh of Mahāmāyā;

For it is the Mother's Māyā.”

Veda says: “Whatever is designated by speech and called by name is Vikāra.³ Only earth is true.”⁴ Vikāra is not false; it is only the state of change of that which is real. A changed thing is only the real thing in another state; it is only the changed name and form which appear and disappear. The true form has neither appearance nor disappearance. Just as cups, jars, dishes, or whatever else you may make with earth will undoubtedly remain earth in substance; as wrist-chains, bracelets, earrings, or whatever else you may make with gold will be gold in substance and nothing else, so in this dualistic world, with all its variety of names and forms, father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, you and I, non-moving and moving things, insects, flies, and the other names and forms which we see, are all only the Parabrahman manifesting Itself in different forms, such forms being due to change by Māyā, and in reality nothing

¹ Tattva.

² A volume of verses by the Author.

³ See *post*.

⁴ Referring to the simile of a ghata (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but

but a manifestation of Brahman.¹ The only distinction is that in the body of Īśvara this power of manifestation² is fully manifested, whilst in the body of Jīva it is not so. I therefore said that because changed names and forms are false, the true names and forms are not so.

In the domain of Sādhana this is Brahma-vision. Gitānjali³ has therefore put into the mouth of Menakā:

“ Umā is the adored of the world;

No mere daughter is She.

With Brahman as Hara, on a bejewelled throne,

She sits as Parabrahmasanātani.⁴

Thy Tripurasundara Digambara⁵ exists,

Far excelling in lustre ten million suns.

On the left of Hara sits my Umā,

Whose golden beauty shines as a thousand million moons.

There laughs Śaḍānana,⁶ in Sadānanda's⁵ arms;

Gajānana⁷ dances in Jagadambā's⁸ arms,

The Music of Śambhu's dambura⁹

Draws peals of laughter from Kumāra¹⁰

And from Ganeśa, at the clap of Umā's hands.

In the arms of two Brahmas¹¹ rest the two Brahma-children,¹²

And you and I again are Brahma's father and mother.

This saṁsāra instinct, with Brahma-bliss, is but a Vikāra¹³ of

Brahman,

And thus my perfect Brahman is His charming spouse.

O Mountain! I hear another strange thing—

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Hara are Umā's sons;

Umā is not thine and mine alone.

She exists as everything moving or immovable in the Universe.

Grandfather says She is grandmother

Who gave birth to Piṭāmbara¹⁴ and Digambara.¹⁵

Upon hearing you and me call her 'daughter'

How She must laugh in her mind!

Being thus ashamed and afraid to call Her daughter,

¹ Brahnavibhūti.

² Referring to the simile of a ghaṭa (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but the earth of which it is composed is true.

³ A volume of verses by the Author.

⁴ Devī as the eternal Parabrahman.

⁵ Śiva.

⁶ The six-headed Kārtikeya, son of Śiva.

⁷ Elephant-headed Ganeśa.

⁸ The Devī.

⁹ Śiva's drum.

¹⁰ Kārtikeya, *vide ante*. ¹¹ Devī and Śiva. ¹² Kārtikeya and Ganeśa.

¹³ See *post*.

¹⁴ Viṣṇu, who, as Kṛṣṇa, wears yellow cloth.

The Queen (Menakā) may well call herself the daughter's daughter
But that daughter is not daughter to the Queen alone.

If entreated She becomes even the daughter of a beggar-woman;

Śiva Candra says, O Lady of the Mountain! (Menakā)

Why, now that you know all, do you still call Her daughter?

Be yourself daughter for once.

And offering Jabā flowers to the daughter's lotus feet,

Cry: 'Victory to Mother!' " ¹

One must rise above names and forms and make all things ² rest on the immutable Brahma. In order to rise above written names and forms discrimination ³ is necessary. Discrimination ³ is nothing but the understanding of the true nature of things. In discussing the fundamental nature of name and form the whole attention must be directed to the Parabrahman, just as in discussing the question of the substance of a cup the attention is directed to the earth (of which it is made). But because you must use names and forms this does not mean that you must leave this Brahmāṇḍa, with its names and forms, and go to live in another Brahmāṇḍa. Judge as you are, your name and form will accompany you to whatever Brahmāṇḍa you may go. One cannot, therefore, discuss name and form by throwing off name and form altogether. Just as the true nature of light would not be known were it not for the existence of darkness, so the non-dualistic existence ² cannot be known without the existence of this dualistic Brahmāṇḍa composed of names and forms. Without it there could have been no judge of dualism and non-dualism, nor indeed any necessity for such a judge. To understand the true nature of earth it is not necessary to go to a country where there are no pots and potters. A person of intelligence will place a pot before himself, and see that under its form there is really nothing but earth. He who has recognized this is not astonished at the sight of a pot, but is, on the contrary, pleased to see the wonderful capacity which earth possesses of taking on forms. Similarly, he who has mastered the Brahma-tattva ⁴ is not astonished at the sight of this created universe, but is, on the contrary, overjoyed to see the eternal śakti of Brahmayāī. He forgets all names and forms and sees in every form the Brahma-form underlying the worldly form. As everyone sees that there are pots, but the wise alone know that there is nothing but earth, so, although all see the saṃsāra full of wives, sons, and relations, the Tāntrik sādḥaka alone knows that it is nothing

¹ The gist of these verses is that Pārvatī and Śiva are not merely the daughter and son-in-law of the Lord of Mountains and Menakā, but are the one Supreme Spirit, manifesting as, and dwelling in, all forms.

² Tattva.

³ Viveka.

⁴ i.e., who knows that all, whatever may be its varied appearance, is but

but Brahmamayī's self. He who has understood that in order to rise above name and form it is necessary to forget that things have distinctive properties giving rise to such names and forms, and to know that the true Śakti of Brahma alone exists, he alone has risen above name and form and has perceived that all is but the immutable Brahman.

"No amount of japa, homa, and fasting will give liberation. It is by the realization alone that 'I am indeed Brahman,' that Jīva will gain liberation."

As the mind of a drunken or deeply slumbering man is not affected even if he is embraced by a young woman, so self-realization or perception of the real does not come to one who is intoxicated with an intense delusion¹ and is under the influence of the sleep of māyā, even should he be animated by Sādhana. If Japa, Homa, Vrata,² and fasts are not accompanied by self-knowledge they avail nothing, even though they be practised for a hundred years. It is not, however, meant that all japa, homa, etc., is ineffectual to gain liberation. For why, then, should it be necessary to state that (under certain conditions) they are so ineffectual? As a matter of fact, japa, homa, fasting are so many means of attaining self-knowledge. Śāstra has consequently said that liberation will not be gained even after a hundred years by the mere performance of the ordinary karma,³ if there be complete disregard for what is fundamental—namely, self-knowledge. Śāstra does not mean that one who has known the self⁴ has no karma to perform; it rather means that none but those who know the self have a right to perform karma.

Ātmā⁵ is witness⁶ (that is, it only looks upon the working of the universe caused by māyā without interest therein) and is omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. (Like the space in a room)⁷ Ātmā possesses, yet does not possess, body (that is, although Ātmā inhabits the body, it remains ever detached from its qualities). Jīva attains liberation when he realizes this truth. He is without a doubt liberated who has cast off all idea of name and form as mere child's play and has become solely devoted to the Brahman.

¹ Moha.

² See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ Ritual acts.

⁴ Presumably the author here and in next line refers to the stages prior to complete self-recognition—viz., regard for and endeavour to obtain self-knowledge.

⁵ The Spirit.

⁶ And so it is said: Ātmā sāksī chetah kevalo nirguṇaśca" (Ātmā is the sole intelligent witness without attributes). To its endurance as permanent witness of all changing states is due the Kantian "synthetic unity of apperception".

⁷ That is, space has no form itself but takes form from the room in

During play children think of their dolls as sons and daughters; but their names and forms disappear when play is over. In the same way, however much you may build in your own mind names and forms by the establishment of relationships, whether by way of wife, son, father, and mother, with jīvas who are the māyā-dolls in the play-ground of this saṃsāra, know it for certain that with the end of your earthly life all such names and forms will disappear. Therefore, he who has ceased from play and cast aside all māyik¹ names and forms while there is yet time, and who, setting his mind and Ātmā on the Parabrahman who is above māyā, has united himself with the Paramātmā, such an one, even though inhabiting the māyik¹ body, is undoubtedly eternally free, like the Brahman Itself.

“If images imagined in the mind could give liberation to Jīva, then one could also become a King by receiving a kingdom in dream.”

As, despite his māyik body, Jīva may obtain freedom from birth by knowledge of the essential truth,² the perception of the truth of the Self being the sole cause of such freedom, so a Sādhaka may attain nirvāṇa kaivalya by the worship (with knowledge of the Self) of an image of Jagadambā in the form in which She appeared in māyā for the benefit of Her devotees, and by perception of the greatness of that image—that is, of the presence in it, in eternal forms, of the eternal Śakti of Her who is eternity itself. This is the sole cause of such nirvāṇa kaivalya.³

He,⁴ who with loins girt with yellow cloth, sat as Pārtha's⁵ charioteer, glorious with the glory of his devotee, on the seat of Arjuna's chariot as the Pāṇḍavas' friend, holding the reins of the white horses in his left, and a whip in the right hand; He, who but a moment before, finding his friend Arjuna overcome by impatience and delusion,⁶ and unwilling to do his own dharma,⁷ had counselled him in words of wisdom; He, in the twinkling of an eye, changed that form of His—that sweet form of a delicate, dark hue, like that of a freshly formed cloud, charming the minds and hearts of the whole world, and disappeared, and in the twinkling of an eye thousands of hands and feet of the universe-embracing great body extended to each of the ten quarters of the heavens, and a terrible mass of light, issuing from thousands of widely-expanded eyes, dimmed the rays of the sun. Notwithstanding his endowment of divine vision, that Prince of Heroes, Arjuna, shook with fear, and with trembling voice and folded hands said: “I cannot see the quarters of space nor am I at ease. Have mercy, O Lord of Devas! in whom the world resides.”

¹ Made of and by Māyā.

² Tattva.

³ Supreme liberation (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

In Bali's¹ Yajña² heaven, earth, and the nether world were covered by the two feet of the Vāmana Brāhmaṇa.³ By Bali's good fortune a third foot, hitherto unseen by even Brahmā and other Devas, shot out from Bhagavān's navel, through the wonderful śakti of the Almighty. Advised by his Queen, who was learned in spiritual lore, King Bali bowed down, and then the foot, the dispeller of fear and the wealth of devotees, was placed on his head. The fortunate King Bali went to the nether world, and Bhagavān, the reliever of the burdens of the world, abandoned even Vaikuṇṭha, and Himself became Bali's door-keeper in the nether world. To-day, only if he permits and kindly opens the door, can one see King Bali. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha,⁴ the monarch of monarchs, Himself stands at Bali's door, though at His own door of Vaikuṇṭha Brahmā and other Devas ever remain standing, praying for admittance to His presence, the all in all of a devotee's life. Bhagavān, the creator of all things, Thou alone, O Lord! knowest the greatness of a devotee. And you, King Bali, a Prince of Daityas,⁵ are a Prince of Devotees. What kingdom is it which you have acquired, to guard which the Supreme Monarch of the universe has Himself become your door-keeper?

Again, on the banks of the Yamunā, at the root of the kādamba-tree, the sweet flute⁶ sounded. By what mantra of what secret sādhana we know not, the fair women of the city of Vraja stood in their thousands in the ecstasy of their great love,⁷ surrounding Bhagavān, the son of Nanda, as immovable stars surround the full moon. Instantly, by virtue of his wonderful Vaiṣṇavī māyā, Bhagavān appeared to each of them in a separate body, and threw his arms round the neck of each of the fair women, unseen by the others. The Devas assembled in the sky above Bṛndāvana in order to see the incomparable beauty of the body of Kṛṣṇa in the waters of the Yamunā, on land and in space. Admidst showers of flowers offered by them with reverence, to the joyous sounds of music and dancing by Vidyādharas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Apsarās, Yakṣas, and Cāraṇas,⁸ to the song of triumph by the herds-women, and amidst the manifestation of the perfect greatness of Pūrṇa

¹ Bali was a Daitya, grandson of Prahlāda, who conquered the three worlds and then performed a great yajña, in which he intended to give away all that belonged to him, when Viṣṇu as Vāmana appeared before him and asked for land sufficient to put three feet on. This was promised, when the Vāmana with two feet covered the world.

² Sacrifice.

³ The Viṣṇu avatāra of that name—as dwarf.

⁴ Viṣṇu's heaven.

⁵ Demonic beings.

⁶ Of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

⁷ Rāsa.

Brahmasanātana,¹ the huge waves of the heroic valour of the charmer of Madana² rolled in the sea of the play of love.³

The sight of the misery of Devas, caused by the oppressions of Mahiṣa the Asura, pained the loving heart of Her who is full of mercy for all sufferers. She, who embodies all śaktis, manifested Her śakti and appeared in the form of a mass of fury born of the anger of the Devas. The earth sank under the weight of the beauteous lotus feet of that form, all full of consciousness of Her who is consciousness itself. Her crown pierced the firmament, and, delighting in war, She stood extending Her thousand arms over the field of battle. Seeing the Brahman aspect of the Brahmamayī the immortals shouted: "Victory! victory! victory!" and in joy began to worship the lotus feet of the blissful Devī.

Again, when previous to the destruction of Śumbha and Niśumbha, Kauśiki⁴ emerged from the body of Pārvatī, beautiful as a golden champak flower, the fair appearance of Pārvatī became instantly changed into the shining blue lustre, more beautiful than that of a blue lotus, of Umā, who appeared as Śyāmā. Into the glowing fire of Her presence the King of the Daityas jumped and was thereupon consumed as if he were a mere insect. Again, in the battle with Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa,⁴ the śakti of Cāmūṇḍā⁵ burst forth from the forehead of Śyāmā, wrinkled with wrath. In the battle with Raktabīja,⁴ Śivadūti⁶ issued from Śyāmā, who is Mūlaprakṛti. In the fight with Śumbha it was into Her body that Brahmāṇī and other Śaktis suddenly disappeared. Prior to Dakṣa's yajña⁷ ten Mahāvidyās appeared from out of the single body of Satī and again disappeared into it. Again, at the time of the destruction of that yajña, a shadow-Satī⁸ appeared from out of the original body of Satī, and the māyik body was abandoned into the fire of yajña. Later, in the home of Himālaya, he was shown the world-form manifestation of Brahman in the newly-born body of a daughter,⁹ and into that body again those manifestations were withdrawn.

The appearance and disappearance in the manner of innumerable playful bodies from and into Her single body clearly proves that the body of Sacchidānandamayī¹⁰ is nothing but Sacchidānanda; that the variety in forms is due to variety in māyā made by Her own desire, and that there

¹ The full eternal Brahman.

² The Deva of love.

³ The passage refers to the rāsaliḷā play of love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Gopis.

⁴ Demons (see the Devī-Māhātmya).

⁵ A terrific form of the Devī.

⁶ A Śakti issuing from Śyāmā.

⁷ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.

⁸ Chhāyāsatī.

⁹ Devī incarnating as Pārvatī.

¹⁰ The Devī as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Sacchidānanda is the

is no means of specifying any of Her particular forms as being Her real form truly defined by unquestionable signs. From the One comes the infinite, which becomes One again by the disappearance of the infinite. In this manner, in Her body, in the twinkling of an eye, there is creation, and in another twinkling a dissolution.¹ In this state of things to endeavour to ascertain the forms of Her who is co-extensive with the universe is but the counting of the waves of the sea. Again, in the hearts of Sādhakas who have attained Siddhi She appears and disappears eternally in infinite forms, such forms changing at every moment; this being so, it is impossible to say that She is in reality bound to any one particular form. To know, therefore, the truth² as to Her form, we must understand that Her real Self is above all forms. Though connected with infinite forms, She is, in fact, unattached to any form. Whenever the Icchāmayī³ puts forth any form of māyā according to Her desire, then a reflection appears of the form which She willingly assumes. Seeing that reflection in the mirror of māyā She becomes charmed with Her own form and, like an enchanted girl, the Ānandamayī⁴ dances with joy and claps Her hands. In the establishment of a dual relationship between Jīva and Brahman She dances in Her own joy, into which She sinks.

Overwhelmed with emotion at this play of Hers, a Sādhaka, had said :

“ Kālī, Charmer of the mind of Mahākālā! Thou who art ever full of bliss, Thou danceth in Thy own joy, O Mother! and Thyself dost clap Thy hands.”

He who, when practising Sādhana of the Brahma-forms of the Brahmamayī, does not possess this knowledge concerning the Brahman is not, in fact, competent to worship Her forms. Whenever, during creation, preservation, and destruction, a necessity has arisen for any particular form She who is will itself has entered into that form, and when Her purpose has been served, that māyik form has at once disappeared. The forms, however, with which the eternal flow of the universe is eternally concerned and in which the three principles⁵ of creation, preservation, and destruction are contained are ever true and eternal. As they are eternal before creation, so they are eternal after the great dissolution; for the Śāstra has said that such eternal forms are resident in the non-dualistic region unknown to this ephemeral māyik world.⁶

¹ So in the Lalitā Sahasranāma (verse 66), it is said: “ Unmeṣa-nimiṣotpannavipannabhuvanāvaliḥ ” (The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes).

² Tattva.

³ The Devī whose substance is will.

⁴ The Devī whose substance is bliss.

⁵ Tattva.

⁶ That is, the forms referred to exist in potential state, otherwise there could

Veda has said :

“Just as one fire in entering into the womb of earth assumes in every object its form, so the one Dweller in all objects assumes their forms.”

Fire exists in a subtle form in every object in this world composed of the five elements ; but from without it is not at all visible. If, however, there is friction by mutual contact, or fire from without touches it, the fire burns forth. It is the law of Nature that what does not exist in a thing can never appear in it. Had not fire existed in a subtle form in everything in the world, all things would not have been combustible. We must therefore understand that fire exists eternally in the subtlest form in every atom of any object, and that it also exists in a subtle form in the gross body of any object (which is but a conglomeration of atoms), permeating every part of it. For this reason the body of a piece of wood composed of the five elements should also be considered as the body of one of those elements—namely, fire. Similarly, Paramātmā,¹ which dwells in all things, enters and exists throughout the body of the universe.² Tantra has therefore said that he cannot worship images who is ignorant of the spiritual knowledge, that “She exists as Śakti in even vehicles, stones, and metals.” Again, Śrīmad Bhāgavata has said images are of eight kinds—namely, those made of stone, wood, iron, vermilion, sandal paste, etc. ; painted, made of sand, jewels, and mental. “At the time of worship a Sādhaka first of all worships the mental image inwardly,³ and then, after communicating the spirit⁴ of Brahman within him to the image without, commences external worship. Again, those who worship yantras⁵ without an image, worship the mental image of the Devatā. This is the fundamental principle⁶ relating to Her eternal presence and manifestation in yantras and images. For those who do not understand Her omnipresence and this communication of the inward spirit, but merely think to attain liberation by the simple imagination of a form in their minds, such liberation is but a dream.” Śāstra has therefore said:

“If the mere imagination of forms in the mind, without spiritual knowledge and sādhanā, can secure liberation, then people can also become kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams.”

Along with the contemplation of images the entire fundamental truth concerning them must be understood. When this is understood it must

¹ The Supreme Spirit.

² The Brahman is in, though also beyond, the Brahmāṇḍa.

³ Literally, “in inward yajña,” as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and last chapter.

⁴ Tejas—light, force, brilliance, spirit.

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and last chapter.

be realized,¹ and then the spirit must be communicated to the external image, when the process of giving it life will have been accomplished.² It is only when in this manner the Devatā has been established that the lustre of consciousness of Caitanyamayī³ will burst through that earthly image and scatter its rays around, illuminating the heart of the Sādhaka, filling him with joy and liberating his soul from physical existence. The Sādhaka will find this subject⁴ dealt with in greater detail in the Chapter on ordinary worship.

Preserving the former śloka,⁵ in the form of a sūtra,⁶ Bhagavān Himself has explained it in the form of a clear vṛtti:⁷

“Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation, even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, and the like are Īśvara Himself.”

Ritual action⁸ is futile if, in performing it, one is ignorant of the supreme Truth which is to destroy the bonds arising from action. If I do not know by what process this earthen image which I worship is changed into an image full of consciousness, then my image worship is nothing but earth worship. Śāstra has therefore said that without knowledge no amount of severe austerities will enable one to see the True Form of Her Who is the embodiment of all spiritual and intellectual knowledge. It is the sight of Her alone which frees one of bondage. He who is devoid of such knowledge is therefore not qualified to worship images. Without knowledge neither asceticism⁹ nor enjoyment of worldly pleasure can give liberation.

To illustrate this Bhagavān has said:

“If performance of Karma¹⁰ alone, without knowledge of the Brahman, can give liberation; then those who by fasting have reduced themselves to skeletons, and those who, through gluttony, have become big-bellied, can gain liberation by such abstinence and indulgence. But in truth are they really liberated?” “If the mere performance of a vow to live on air, grass, broken particles of rice, or water alone can give liberation, then serpents, beasts, birds, and animals of the waters also (who live on such things) can be liberated (in spite of the absence of knowledge).”

¹ Literally, “made Pratyakṣa.” There are four kinds of proof, according to Nyāya, and three according to Śāṅkhya. The latter are: (1) Pratyakṣa, or direct perception by the mind and senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound; (2) anumānam, or inference; (3) śabda-pramāṇam, or scriptural proof; to which the Nyāya adds (4) upamāna—that is, analogy or recognition of likeness.

² That is, the prāṇapratīṣṭhā rite (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ The Devī Whose substance is consciousness.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Verse.

⁶ Aphorism.

⁷ A form of commentary.

⁸ Karma.

⁹ Tapasyā.

"I have thus related to you the truth¹ about knowledge, the direct cause of *nirvāṇa* liberation. This is the highest treasure of the four classes of *avadhūtas*."¹

The religious healers, of whom we have already spoken, quote the following four *ślokas* out of those above-mentioned as strong evidence in support of their theory that He is devoid of form:²

"He alone is free from the bonds of Karma who has risen above name and form and has made all principles and things rest on the true immutable Brahman." "He is undoubtedly liberated who has shaken off all notions of name and form as though they were child's play, and has solely devoted himself to Brahman." "If forms imagined in the mind can give salvation to *Jīva*, then men may also be Kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams." "Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, etc., are *Īśvara* Himself."

From the explanation which, along with those *ślokas* we have given of their meaning, supported by consideration of the context, conclusion, and object, *Sādhakas* will understand to what perversion of *śāstric* conclusions the wrong interpretations of present day interpreters, blinded by selfishness, lead. *Śāstra* says that *Jīva*, before he can attain liberation, must forget the condition of *Jīva* subject to *māyā*, assumed by Brahman in the *māyā*-built *Brahmāṇḍa*, and sink himself in the unity of *Jīva* and Brahman, which it is the purpose of all great sayings, such as "Thou art It," to establish. *Jīva* must rise above all names and forms which are the object of dualistic knowledge. According to our notion of this non-dualistic perception of the truth³ we, whilst keeping intact the names and forms of our own selves and relatives and also of the whole world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, yet consider it to be the pith of the teaching that it is only the names and forms of *Devatās* which are false and that these only should be abandoned. I fail to understand the necessity for such hurry in doing away with that particular name and form which alone will endure, whilst keeping those names and forms which will prove to be false. It is as though a great

¹ Those who have renounced the world: ascetics. The life of the *avadhūta* is the *Sannyāśrama* of the Kali Yuga (see *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, chap. viii, verse 2). The term has been defined as follows:

"Akṣaratvāt vareṇyatvāt dhūtasamsāravandhanāt.
Tattvamasyārthasiddhatvādvadhūtobhidihiyate."

[An *avadhūta* is so called on account of his being possessed of undecaying greatness, having washed off the bonds of *samsāra* and learnt the meaning of (the great saying) "Thou art That"]

famine threatens the market of Brahmajñāna¹—a famine which will make all things so dear, that whatever purchase be now made will then be profitable. I do not want to deprive them of this profit. What I am sorry for is that the names and forms which constitute the bonds of saṁsāra remain, whilst the names and forms which will cut those bonds is done away with. Hearing that the price of things will go on increasing our purchasers have been in such a hurry that they have forgotten to bring even the wherewithal to make purchases at the outset. Even He has been forgotten Whose worship gives the fruit of the knowledge of Brahman. I know that they say: “For him whose nature has become Brahman² there is no longer any necessity for pūjā, dhyāna and dhāraṇa.” We, too, do not deny this. Śāstra has said: “Whose nature.” That is, the case of the man who, even without dhyāna and the like remains immersed in Brahma-bliss as naturally as he eats or sleeps. For one who has thus become Brahman or, in other words, whose condition of a Jīva has disappeared and been converted into Brahman; for him there is no longer any necessity for dhyāna, dhāraṇa, and pūjā. But through our ill-fortune it has nowadays so happened that a number of persons who, by nature, are Brahma-ghosts,³ have appeared who have neither dhyāna, nor dhāraṇa, nor pūjā, nor adoration. The words of the Śāstra cannot be false. As a matter of fact, such self-willed people who pervert the true meaning of the Śāstra have no right to dhyāna, dhāraṇa, pūjā, or japa. Consequently, these things do not exist so far as they are concerned. The four ślokas on which they rely are preceded by the śloka: “From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā, and Parabrahma alone is the sole truth. When this knowledge is attained Jīva attains liberation.” The śloka: “Ātmā is witness, omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. Ātmā possesses body and yet does not possess it. Jīva attains liberation when he realizes this truth,” is in the midst of the ślokas cited. The following śloka follows them: “If, without knowledge of Brahman, performance of Karma alone can give liberation, then such men as are reduced to skeletons by constant fasting, and such men as become big-bellied by excess of eating may be liberated through such abstinence and indulgence. But are they really liberated?” We fail, then, to understand how these four ślokas, can be put forward to prove that “Brahman cannot have any form,” seeing that they relate to knowledge of Brahman. Śāstra of course, says: “From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā,

¹ Knowledge as to the Brahman.

² Svabhāvat Brahmabhūta.

³ The reference is to the sect of Brāhmos. There is here a pun on the term, “bhūta,” which, used as a suffix, means “state,” and used independently

and Parabrahman alone is the sole truth," and we, too, do not deny this. But in the world, where everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false, are you and I—advocates of the theories of Brahman possessing form, and Brahman being formless respectively—are we true? If this word "false" means non-existent, then you and I too do not exist. I admit that spiritually you and I do not exist, but because we admit it do we really feel it? Is it possible that such men as do feel it question whether Brahman possesses or does not possess form? Where you and I turn out false, where your "you-ness" and my "I-ness" disappear, two persons cannot exist. And where two do not exist, with whom can there be argument? Now, will the dualistic world become non-existent because you and I desire it to be so? Śāstra has said everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false; but the question is, whether we have ever been able to make even a single blade of grass false as the Śāstra says? If we have not, why do we, who have not the power to do away with a blade of grass, presume to do away with Brahmā? Do we feel ashamed even to think of this? Why, the very Śāstra which is invoked to do away with the existence of Devas and Devīs, who are Brahmās with forms, that very Śāstra itself says: "From Brahmā to a blade of grass." If Brahman does not take form, whence comes this Brahmā? And if it is "from Brahman" instead of "from Brahmā," then everything vanishes, and nothing remains as true.

Śāstra is the command of Devatā. For Jīvas it contains ordinances and teachings. Because it has said that the world is false you and I cannot beat time to that tune and dance. The speaker of Śāstra is Bhagavān, who dwells in all things, and is above māyā. Its hearer is Maheśvarī. She who dwells in all things is turīya-caitanya¹ incarnate, and governs universal māyā. To them the falsity of the world is a matter of direct perception; but to you and me it is Brahma-tattva,² attainable only by age-long Sādhana, and beyond the reach of mind and speech. What the result of a battle will be is the concern of the King or Queen; the soldier's only duty is to start for war immediately on receiving an order to do so. The King and Queen know that in this war their victory is inevitable, so that in their conversation on the subject they can express satisfaction and joy. But if, on hearing this conversation, their soldiers were to think, "Since victory is inevitable what is the use of fighting?" and were to give themselves up to rejoicing, it is most likely that the banner of triumph would fly in the dust. You say: "Mahādeva has said that the world is false; why, then, should I worship and adore names and

¹ As to the turīya state of consciousness, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.

forms?" If, with this idea that the world is nothing but Brahman, Sādhakas were to give up performing worship and ritual,¹ the kind of Brahma-knowledge which will be attained, and is, in fact, being nowadays attained, is not worth mentioning. Veda has said: "When everything in relation to a Jīva has been unified with Brahman what will he then see, what will he hear, what will he smell, etc., and with what?" That is to say, where mind, intellect, body, senses, and everything else is Brahman, then worship and ritual¹ is impossible. It is of no use to see Brahman, to hear Brahman, etc., with Brahman. The author of Vedānta Paribhāṣā concludes: "Although the world is false, it is not false to those who are in the saṃsāra." That is to say, a dream is not false when a person sees it. Had dreams been false when seen, why should we have cried with terror at the sight of tigers in dreams? Śruti, again, says as the result of a spurious perception of a dualistic world, Jīva becomes instantly separated from Brahman and sees the world in a separate aspect. Philosophers have therefore said as follows: Although the notion that the body is the Self is spiritually false, it is yet deemed an established fact from the worldly point of view—that is to say, people consider the body to be the Self and say: "I have become thin, I have become fat, I have been cured, I am ill, etc."; yet Ātmā, which is nothing but existence, consciousness, and bliss, is neither thin nor fat, diseased nor cured, but is ever free from change or corruption, joy, sorrow, disease, grief, thinness, fatness, etc., which are conditions of the body alone. Just as people consider the body to be that Ātmā, and consider all these conditions to be established facts in the worldly state, so the dualistic world, though in fact false, must yet, so long as Brahman is not perceived in all things, be considered as an established, separately-existing fact. We know that the sun always rises in the east; still, if we go to a new place, it appears that the sun is rising in the west, north, or south. Just as, in spite of knowing the truth in this matter and disbelieving the opposite, we become firmly convinced that that opposite itself is really true; just as this mistake in the matter of the direction or the sun's rising is inevitable, so this false perception of the dualistic world also is inevitable. We cannot be asked as a favour to accept the dualistic world as an established fact. Until this dream of māyā is dispelled, until the bonds of Karma are destroyed, until the idea of difference between "you and me" disappears, Jīva cannot but have faith in this dualistic universe, call it false, a dream, or fancy, as you may. The influence of Karma, the force of action, will compel me, even against my own will, to believe in it. Just as a weak fish caught in a net in water can never pass outside the net, however much it may move about inside it, so the-

worldly Jīva caught in the māyā of the saṃsāra can never sever the bonds of māyā and enter into the unfathomable depth of Brahmatattva outside of māyā. Just as, in spite of being in water, the fish is prevented from moving out by the bondage of the net, so, in spite of being in the universe full of Brahman, Jīva is prevented by the bondage of māyā from entering freely into that Blissful Presence. Living in this dualistic world, you and I, māyik Jīvas, are, therefore, bound to believe in it as a constant reality even against our will, although it is in fact not so.

Every worshipper is actuated by an earnest desire to know the nature¹ of his real self; but the existence of the desire does not bring about its fulfilment for all. It is for the accomplishment of this desire that sādhana is required. Without sādhana it can never be fulfilled. A child in the womb may, of course, form a desire to see its mother, but so long as it is in the womb it is impossible for it to do so. The desire can be fulfilled only for that child who has fortunately been safely born. Similarly, it is impossible for people living in Mahāmāyā's māyā-womb of this universe to see that beautiful appearance of Hers which charms the heart of the conqueror of Death.² He who has, by the accumulation of religious merits in many births, been delivered from the sheath of the womb of māyā of the Mother of the Universe, he alone is a fit child to see the Brahma-form of the Brahmamayī. It is only such a child who truly has the right to suck that milk from the breast of Brahmamayī, which even Brahmā and other Devas rarely obtain. He alone may share Her assuring lap with Kārtika and Gaṇeśa. If, however, on seeing the pains of austere Sādhana practised by any of Her children, the merciful Mother should gratify him; if She, who dwells in the heart of the Lord of Yogis,³ should rend the deep darkness of the black night⁴ in Her womb by the mass of light issuing from Her black, cloudlike appearance, which dispels the fear of death and Herself appear in the heart of the child lying in yoga in her womb; if She cuts the bonds of saṃsāra-māyā with the sharp edge of Her own māyā sword and takes the devoted sādhaṅka up on Her lap—then also in such a case know that this is done as the inevitable fruit of much austere sādhana practised in many previous births, and that none of these things have been accomplished without sādhana. It is a domain which none can reach but through real sādhana. Although the desire for going out may be strong, yet the door of the room in which Jīva is shut is not within his reach. The utmost that Jīva can do is to lie down on the bed of māyā and weep; but it is Mother alone who can open the door. Jīva can only weep loudly and awaken the Mother. By virtue of austere sādhana the Sādhaṅka can awaken Mother

¹ Tattva.

² Mrtyuñjaya, or Śiva.

Kulakuṇḍalinī,¹ sleeping in the Mulādhāra.² If She rises and opens the door of Brahmarandhra,² then alone may Jīva come forth ; otherwise all worship and adoration are but a crying in the wilderness. The siddhi, which is attained in Sādhana by the piercing of the six chakras,³ is never attained by Jīva whilst he is crushed by the wheels of the Samsāra.

Secondly, it is not within the province of Jīva to say whether Brahman has or has not name and form and even if he speaks none will hear him, for the matter⁴ is beyond the knowledge and intellectual perception of Jīva. Our belief and unbelief in this world are due merely to the fact that what we believe has been stated, and what we disbelieve has been denied, by a Śāstra, which is revealed and not of human origin. The point is this : the very Śāstra which says that Brahman has no name and no forms also says, "From Brahman to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā." If the practical existence of a thing could be done away with by the mere statement that it is the creation of māyā, why, then, does this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, exist?

The world is not a thing imperceptible to Jīva, If it is perfectly true that in the world created by māyā even a blade of grass can exist, we are unable to understand what it is which makes the existence of Brahmā in it impossible. If, by a far-fetched interpretation,⁵ it is said that the root word Brahman here does not refer to fourheaded and red-coloured Brahmā possessing a body, there is an end of the matter. If even formless and attributeless Brahman becomes the creation of māyā and, consequently, false along with a blade of grass, then what remains as the true Brahman? To cut the branch of a tree on which one sits ; to do away with formless Brahman in endeavouring to dispense with Brahman possessing form is a Kālidāsa⁶ kind of intelligence which will produce an inevitable fall for the interpreter. In this connection we have nothing to say but to give a warning. It is on the authority of that Śāstra we say that Brahmā is included in the world, so that Brahmā will exist so long as the world exists, or the world will exist so long as Brahmā exists. As the world is not false to you and me, in spite of its being the creation of māyā, so Brahmā and other Devatās also are not false to Sādhakas.

Thirdly, if, in spite of its being untenable according to reasoning, argument, and authority, we were to accept the interpretation of the followers of the theory that Īśvara is formless and to say that Brahman

¹ Vide ante and Introduction to Tantra Śāstra. ² See Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.

³ Ṣaṭcakrabhedha (vide ante).

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Ādhyātmik, in the sense of untrue.

⁶ Kālidāsa, the great poet, is said to have been in his early years such a fool in practical matters as to have attempted to cut down the branch of a tree

has really no name and form, then also there is no escape. If Brahman has no name and form, who is it, then, that says, "Brahman has no name and form"? The speaker of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra is Sadāśiva and the person spoken to is Ādyāśakti, both being the Brahman with names and forms. Śāstra says: "Maheśvara has introduced the Tantras by means of questions and answers, Himself taking the places both of Guru (teacher) and Śiṣya (pupil)"—that is to say, in Āgama the Devī has put questions as disciple and Mahādeva has answered them as guru, and in Nigama Mahādeva Himself has asked questions as disciple, and the Devī has replied as Guru; or, in aspect inseparable from the Devī, the Deva Himself has, in both places, revealed the Tantras both as guru and pupil. If Brahman has no name and form, then this Deva and this Devī become false; and if the Deva and the Devī become false, how can the Tantra Śāstra remain true? Tantra is the most glorious of all Śāstras because it is the word of Mahādeva and Mahādevī. If to-day that Deva and Devī, the speakers of Tantra, turn out to be false, where then is the glory and authority of Tantra? If Tantra is not the command of Devatā it may be easily explained away as the mistaken word of man and, consequently, unworthy of respect. No one will then bow his head to the authority of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. If the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing no form says that he does not believe that Brahman has name and form, the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing form will instantly reply that he has no faith in the authority of Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Thus all discussion and reasonings will cease, all interpretations will be useless, and all authorities and evidence will be of no value. I therefore say, where there is no means of defending one's own side, it is the height of folly to try to serve one's purpose by tricks.

Another thing. If in discussion a position of authority must be assigned to Śāstra everything which is said in it should be accepted as correct. If a sādḥaka abandons the worship of images and takes to dhyāna and dhāraṇa alone, then the mental image formed by him in his mind becomes the object of his dhyāna and adoration. If an image imagined in the mind is supposed to be unable to give liberation, then there is no reason why dhyāna and dhāraṇa¹ without image worship should give it, because in that dhyāna also the sādḥaka has to depend on a mental image. And if dhyāna does not bring liberation, then Devarṣis, Maharṣis, Rājarṣis,² Yogis and Munis³ are mere fools, who waste their days in useless labour. Accomplished great sādḥakas also become deprived of siddhi. Moreover, why in that case should the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra have said: "The dhyānabhāva is the middle form of worship"? Who says.

¹ Meditation and concentration of mind (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

that only the four ślokas of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, referred to above, are worthy of being considered as authority and the rest of the book, consisting of two voluminous parts—Uttarakhāṇḍa and Pūrvakhāṇḍa—is erroneous? If this Tantra is correct, then the whole of it must be correct; if incorrect, then the whole of it must be incorrect. What sort of impartial judgment is it to consider only four ślokas which are to one's liking as correct and all the rest incorrect? I take out four palmfuls of water from the Ganges and consider that small quantity of water as Brahmamayī Gangā, who dwells in Brahmā's Kamaṇḍalu,¹ and all the rest of the stream flowing in an irresistible current from the Himālaya to the sea, as but ditch-water. What sort of faith is this? The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra deals with Varṇāśrama,² Yuga-dharma,³ Yogatattva,⁴ the six Cakras,⁵ politics, Vyāvahāra dharma,⁶ Sādhana dharma,⁷ creation, preservation, and destruction, the divisions of the Brahmāṇḍa,⁸ the fourteen worlds,⁹ seven svargas,⁹ and seven pātālas,¹⁰ names, seats, and worships of Devas and Devis, the divya, vīra, and paśu forms of worship,¹¹ Mantras¹⁰ and Yantras¹⁰ of Devatās, the consecration of temples and images, the various kinds of liberation,¹² and with a whole mass of rules and regulations on various other subjects.

To consider the statements contained in the book on all these subjects to be incorrect with the exception of four ślokas, and these only subject to a wrong and perverse interpretation, is not judgment but treachery, intense selfishness, lawlessness,¹³ or the raving of a madman. Everywhere the Sādhana dharma has been classified under the three distinct sections of Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti, whether according to Tantra or Veda or Purāṇa.¹⁴ According to this system Bhagavān has, in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, given instructions in the Jñāna division after purification of the mind by performance of Karma. It is from these instructions, when handled by the senseless interpreters of the present day, that all this scepticism, by which nothing is gained but everything is lost, arises. Just

¹ A vessel carried by ascetics.

² Caste system and rules.

³ The peculiar characteristics and Dharma of the different ages.

⁴ Science and art of Yoga.

⁵ Centres in the body which are dealt with in works on Tāntrik yoga (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ Law.

⁷ Rules relating to Sādhana (*Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁸ Universe.

⁹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

¹⁰ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

¹¹ Suited to the three classes of men.

¹² Mukti, which is not gained at one step.

¹³ Svecchhā—that is, acting according to own will, and not according to law or rule.

¹⁴ Action (including ritual), knowledge, and devotion.

as milk put into the mouth of a naturally venomous snake is turned into poison, so Śāstra, handled by selfish persons who are naturally faithless, gives rise to such scepticism. As a matter of fact, it is not the case that those who are determined thus to ruin the Āryan society by wrong interpretations of Śāstra are themselves unaware of their own treachery; but although they are aware of it the selfishness of the weak human heart prevents them from acting according to that knowledge. What they know remains within them, and what they try to make illiterate and foolish villagers understand is something quite different. Nowadays we can, in speaking of them, merely use the expression "double-tongued," one tongue being within and another without. But we can dare say that had an Āryan Prince now ruled the country the tongues of such interpreters would forthwith have been actually made double.¹

Again: It is not to be wondered at that he should always speak ill of that, the excellent virtues of which he has no knowledge; just as a huntswoman throws away the pearl which is formed in the heads of elephants and adorns herself with a garland of berries,² Āryan poets have, therefore, said that such things should not be regretted, for what one has no power to comprehend one neglects but does not dishonour. "The nose alone smells the fragrance of Mallikā and Mālātī flowers and not the eye." The eye does not, however, commit any offence thereby; it is merely devoid of the power of smelling. Similarly, should a person (who has yet to await many births before he acquires that Jñāna and Bhakti and purity of mind which befit one for the worship of images) say that worship of images is a mistake, he must not be understood to commit any offence or to deserve any punishment. In fact, he is an object of pity to the public, for Bhagavān has not yet granted him the power to comprehend the deep and solemn truth³ relating to the worship of images of the Deity. It should be understood that although he is a mānava (man) in outward appearance, internally he is still imperfect in mānavatva.⁴ He is still a stranger in the human world only just elevated from the lower stratum of being. However that may be, wayfarers need be warned before giving moral advice to a highway robber. All this argument should be postponed and first of all society should be warned. Fortunately, the robbers have, by their inopportune howling, made themselves known, and wayfarers have recognized their voice. The Āryan

¹ Their tongues would have been slit for their heresy.

² Gunjā, a red blackberry, used by goldsmiths in India as a small weight.

³ Tattva.

⁴ The proper state of a descendant of Manu or Humanity. As some one has remarked, the bulk of human beings now existing can only be said to be candidates for true humanity.

society has for some time discovered the hidden purpose of these interpretations of the Śāstra. The Mother of the world, the subduer of Daityas,¹ has appeared in the hearts of devotees and saved the world from these Daityas of Kali Yuga. At that part of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata where Bhagavān, the dispeller of the fear of existence, in dealing with sādhana dharma,² discusses with Uddhava, the Prince of devotees, the subject³ of devotees, He says:

“Tīrthas⁴ consisting of water are not such tīrthas; images of Devas made of earth and of stone are not such Devas as sādhus⁵ are, for tīrthas consisting of water and images of Devas made of earth and stone purify sinners after long service and worship, whilst sādhus possess such wonderful power that their sight alone sanctifies Jīva.”

“He who worships my image without (through illusion) knowing me, as Ātmā-Īśvara, the dweller in all things, merely pours oblations into ashes.”⁶

The aforesaid healers consider these two ślokas also as evidence in favour of the theory of the Deity possessing no form. From the first śloka they glean that tīrthas consisting of water are not tīrthas at all, and images of Devas made of earth are not Devas at all. But, I ask, had it been so, why should it be said that they purify after a long time? By what power can a tīrtha which is not a tīrtha, and a Deva who is not a Deva, purify Jīva even after long service? When Bhagavān has said that they purify if they are long served, the śloka must be understood to mean that the power of purification which pious devotees possess is greater than that of tīrthas and images of Devatās. Purification by tīrthas and images of Devas depends on long service and worship by Jīva, but this is not needed to gain purification by the gracious look of devotees who freely dispense their mercy. We are confident that sādhakas will forgive the thieves who possess so little intelligence and cunning as to proceed to commit theft in the first and second parts of a verse, in the third of which they are detected.

Again, from the second śloka they have gathered that those who worship images instead of praying in this fashion, “Īśvara, who dwells in all things,” merely pour oblations into ashes. We regret to say that the thought of this illustration in connection with such an illustrator

¹ Demons.

² The rules relating to Sādhana. For Dharma, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ *Lit.*: “states the tattva.”

⁴ Places of pilgrimage, such as Kālīghāt, Gaya, Kāmākhyā, Pūrī, etc. The esoteric tīrthas are in the human body itself.

⁵ Saintly men.

induces us to smile as well as puts us to shame. Why do such men as have no faith in pūjā, japa, stava, and homa¹ make use of the illustration of pouring oblations into ashes? It is because oblations are actually poured into fire that the expression "pouring oblations into ashes" means the contrary thing. To pour oblations into fire is an act of worship towards an embodied Deity. If this worship of embodied Deity is itself a mistaken act, whence comes this illustration drawn from homa? However that may be, Bhagavān has said that whoever worships His image without the knowledge that He dwells in all things and is Ātmā and Īśvara, merely pours oblations into ashes, because without the knowledge that He is in all things, sentient as well as non-sentient, how can one believe in His existence in that image and in the possibility of the invocation of His life into it, and the like? In other words, whoever has not the knowledge that He is Brahman without distinctions is even totally unfit for image worship. The import of the śloka, therefore, comes to this, that without knowledge of Brahman, image-worship is of no avail; but by virtue of the pernicious influence of the present time it has come to mean that whoever worships images merely pours oblations into ashes. Great man! keep your interpretation to yourself. Do not, with an uncalled-for generosity, come forward to preach that to people which will make them as poor as street beggars. Do not, I pray, any longer create mischief in the name of interpretation.

¹Worship, recitation, hymn and fire-sacrifice (homa) (see *Introduction to*

CHAPTER VII

WHAT IS ŚAKTI?¹

HERE, in the course of the present discussion, it has become necessary to decide a few points about Śakti-tattva. Whether because of the particular age we live in, or of sectarianism, there exist in Bengal a number of leaders, or pseudo-leaders, of the religious community who think and preach that they alone and a few other persons belonging to their community and holding their views are learned in all Śāstras, competent to pass judgment on all Tattvas and Dikṣā-gurus of sādhakas² belonging to all communities. We know not by what curse of Bhagavān they consider it a great sin, for which there is no atonement, to believe that Bhagavān and Bhagavatī are one and the same being, nor why they look down with hatred and disgust, even as though their touch were polluting as that of hell-worms, on all persons who entertain such a belief. Such conduct by men towards their fellow-beings is not altogether impossible; but there is no escape for even Devatās, no pardon for even Īśvara, from them. A little inquiry in confidence will reveal to Sādhakas that in most places these people, being themselves Vaiṣṇavas, first worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and then offer to Śrī Rādhikā the articles already offered to Him. The reason for their doing so is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who holds all Śakti, is Lord and Śrī Rādhikā, who is Śakti Herself, is His handmaid, and that it is the duty of the handmaid to partake of the leavings of Her Lord's food, leavings which are tokens of His favour and, consequently, precious and particularly dear to Her. The honour of Rādhikā, however, is thus in a fashion maintained, because She is the companion or, at least, handmaid of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But the case of Gāyatrī, who is single, is different. Had She been the companion of any Deva they could easily have included Her in the same class with Rādhikā; but Gāyatrī, the Mother of the three Vedas, and the progenitrix

¹ Śakti-tattva. Śakti is that which makes able, or that Power by virtue of which things happen or act (see *post*). That power belongs to, or more properly *is*, the Brahman, and is of various kinds, as to which see following pages.

of the triad of Devas,¹ is no one's companion, and thus there is no opportunity to call Her anyone's handmaid. For this reason they have altogether abandoned Gāyatrī, considering Her to be "bare Śakti". Born in the line of Brahmā, these people yet think that it is a great sin to repeat Gāyatrī or even to admit that She is Brahman or Īśvara, and consider that it is improper to divulge to the public this intense secret devotion in the store of sādhana. It is only with a view to keeping up social and family custom and distinction of caste in the sight of others that Brāhmaṇa Purohitas² are called in, as a formal matter, to invest their children with the sacred thread.³ If, unable to make time himself, the Purohita requests the father or grandfather of the invested boy to teach him Sandhyā⁴ and Gāyatrī,⁵ it is often found that the greatest difficulty arises.

Besides this, there are a few philosophical⁶ pandits who say that worship of Śakti is not directly worship of Brahman. In their opinion such an inference is not even contrary to the teaching of Śāstra. They have decided that Ādyāśakti Mahāmāyā⁷ is She who is called māyā⁸ or avidyā⁹ by the Vedānta. This māyā or avidyā is gross matter, something devoid of consciousness. It is only when Ātmā, who is consciousness itself, is reflected in Her that She appears to possess consciousness for Her work. For this reason these people say that He who possesses śakti is full of consciousness while śakti is gross matter. What, then, are those who worship gross matter instead of Brahman but gross matter themselves?

Let us see whether this conclusion of theirs is approved of by the Śāstra. What the Tantra-śāstra has said about śakti we reserve for subsequent discussion. For those people firmly believe that the purpose of the Tantra Śāstra is to give predominance to śakti, and, consequently, evidence drawn from this source will not appear to be of much weight to them. For this reason we shall first of all quote evidence from the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. The following appears in the hymn to Śiva by Brahmā contained in the Chapter on Dakṣa's sacrifice in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata:

"I know that thou art the Īśvara (creator) of the universe. I know also that Thou art Parabrahman, in whom are inseparably united Śakti and Śiva, the womb (yonī) and the seed from which the universe is born. Bhagavān, it is Thou who dividest Thyself into the two forms of Śiva and

¹ Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara.

² Priests.

³ At the upanayana ceremony.

⁴ The prayers and ritual which go by that name (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ The mahāmantra of that name.

⁶ Dārśanik.

⁷ The Devī as primal Śakti.

⁸ Illusion (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

Śakti, and, like a spider in play, dost create, preserve and destroy the universe."

Here Brahmā Himself says that Parabrahman is the non-differentiated substance ¹ of Śiva and Śakti. He, therefore, has not embraced Brahmanism by omitting that part which consists of Śakti. Again, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Bhagavān says to Uddhava:

"Prakṛti, the material of this universe, the supreme Puruṣa, its receptacle and Kāla (Time) its revealer—I am Brahman divided into these three parts."

In the Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, Bhagavān says to Arjuna:

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, and reason also, and egoism ²—these are the eightfold division of My nature.

"This the inferior. Know My other nature, the higher, the life-element, O mighty-armed! by which the universe is upheld." ³

Here Bhagavān first speaks of gross ⁴ Prakṛti, which is divided into eight parts, and then calls the Śakti, who is eternal consciousness ⁵ itself and gives life to all Jīvas, as His (Supreme) ⁶ prakṛti, thus dividing prakṛti into two main parts according as She is "gross" and "conscious".

Again, "Brooding over nature (prakṛti) which is Mine own, I am born through My own Power (māyā)." ⁷

Here, also, Bhagavān has differentiated between His own true prakṛti and māyā.

The following appears in the hymn to Śiva by Pūtātmā contained in the Kāśīkhāṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa:

"O Viśveśvara, ⁸ Thou art the universe itself. There is no difference between Thee and the universe, for Thou art omnipresent and the subject of praiseful hymn, ⁹ the maker of the hymn and even the hymn itself. Thou art both with and without attributes. Even yogīs are without spiritual perception of this truth concerning Thee, O Lord, who moveth as Thou willeth. She is Thy Śakti who appeared as an embodiment of Thy desire when Thou wert no longer able to enjoy Thyself alone. Though one in reality, Thou hast acquired a dual aspect according as Thou art Śiva and Śakti. Thou art Bhagavān, the embodiment of knowledge and desire is Thy Śakti. Thou, in Thy twofold aspect of Śiva and Śakti, gave rise in Thy play to the Śakti of action, and from this

¹ Tattva.

³ Bhagavadgītā, chap. vii, verses 4 and 5.

⁵ Caitanya.

² Manas, buddhi, ahaṅkāra.

⁴ Jaḍa.

⁵ Parāprakṛti.

⁷ Bhagavadgītā, chap. iv, verse 6. A slight departure has been made from Mrs. Besant's translation in order not to differ from the author's Bengali version. Mrs. Besant's translation is: "Though brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through my own Power."

Śakti of action has been generated this world. Thou Thyself art the embodiment of the Śakti of knowledge, Umā is the embodiment of the Śakti of desire, and this universe is the embodiment of the Śakti of action.¹ Thus Thou art the sole cause of the universe."

Again: "Thou as Prakṛti and Puruṣa first created the Brahmāṇḍa, and then inhabited it as all things moving and non-moving. Therefore, O Thou who pervadeth the whole world, nothing is different from Thee. All things exist in Thee, and Thou pervadeth all things." Vālmiki says in the Uttarakhāṇḍa of Adbhūta Rāmāyaṇa:

"Jānakī is primeval, eternal. She is the visible Prakṛti itself. Through Her, austerity is fruitful and heaven is gained. She is the eternal vibhūti of vibhus.² It is that Mahāśakti whom Brahmavādīs³ describe in the two forms of Vidyā and Avidyā. She is Riddhi;⁴ Siddhi, full of guṇas, made of guṇas, and above guṇas. She exists as both Brahman and Brahmāṇḍa. She is the cause of all causes. She eternally plays as Prakṛti and Vikṛti.⁵ She is full of consciousness, and blooms in consciousness. She exists in all things, is Brahman and Mahākūṇḍalinī. All this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, is but Her play, O Brahman. Holding Her in their hearts, yogis sever the heart's ties, and exist under their own true aspect. O Good Doer ! whenever dharma⁶ becomes tarnished and adharma⁷ flourishes, Mahāprakṛti appears through Her own māyā. Rāma also is the supreme light, the supreme abode, and the supreme Puruṣa in flesh and blood ; for there is, in reality, no real difference between Sītā and Rāma. It is because sādhus have realized this that they have thrown off the slumber of māyā, awakened to the state of the knowledge of truth, and crossed from the jaws of death to the other side of the sea of saṁsāra. Rāma is incomprehensible, full of eternal consciousness, omniscient, omnipresent, the sole creator, preserver, and destroyer of all things, blissful and all pervading. Yogis contemplate Him inseparably with Sītā. I shall truly relate, by way of illustration, how, though in truth birthless, Prakṛti and Puruṣa, who exist in causal bodies, take high and wonderful births. Being in truth formless, They assume forms for the salvation of mankind and out of their mercy for it."

Again, when thousand-headed Rāvaṇa was killed by Sītā in the form of Kālīkā, Rāmacandra said in his hymn to Her :

¹ The three Śaktis—Jñāna (cognition), Icchhā (volition), Kriyā (motion).

² Vibhūti is the thing which characterizes the higher nature. Vibhu is one who is all-pervading, and vibhūti is both that which it displays and the power by which it displays.

³ Worshippers of the Brahman.

⁴ Spiritual wealth.

⁵ Freely rendered as "As cause and effect."

“Blessed is my birth to-day, and successful is my devotion; for, being unrevealed to the world, Thou hast favoured me by appearing to my view. All the world is Thy creation, and Pradhāna¹ and other Tattvas² are seated in Thee. At the time of the great dissolution this world disappears in Thee. Thou art the highest goal of Jīva. Some speak of Thee as Prakṛti, different from Vikṛti, while, O Companion of Śiva, others of the spiritually wise describe you as Śiva, Pradhāna Puruṣa, Mahattattva, Brahmā, Īśvara, Avidyā, Niyati, Māyā and Kāla³ and hundreds of other limbs emanate from and exist in Thee. Thou art the supreme Śakti, which is eternal and the highest good. Thou art free from all differences, and the shelter of all differences. Thou existeth as Thine own true Self, O Yogeśvarī, who art Parameśvarī. It is by entering into Thee Puruṣa makes and unmakes Pradhāna⁴ and all other things of the world. It is by uniting with Thee that Puruṣa, the supreme Deva, enjoys the bliss of His Ownself. Thou art the supreme bliss and also the giver of supreme bliss. Thou art the supreme space, the supreme light, immaculate, Śiva, omnipresent, subtle, Parabrahman, and eternal.”

The following appears in the Mahābhāgavata :

“I bow to the Devī, who grants heaven and liberation, by worshipping whom Viriñci⁵ has become the creator, Hari⁶ the preserver, and Girīśa⁷ the destroyer, of this world ; who is the object of contemplation by Yogīs, whom Munis possessed of spiritual knowledge describe as the primal and supreme Prakṛti.

“May She preserve us⁸ who on creating this world according to Her free will has taken birth in it, and receiving Śambhu for Her husband, and whose feet Śambhu placed on His breast when receiving Her for His wife as the fruit of His austerities.”

Suta⁹ said: “High minded Maṇṇi Bhagavān Vyāsa the speaker of endless Dharmaśāstras, chief of all men, learned in the Vedas, and proficient in spiritual knowledge, received no satisfaction from his work in connection with the seventeen Purāṇas. He then bethought himself ‘How shall I relate that Mahāpurāṇa, than which no greater Purāṇa exists on earth, and wherein the supreme Bhagavati is dealt with in all detail?’ Failing to know the truth¹⁰ about the Devī, his heart became agitated. He

¹ The material cause.

² Its derivatives.

³ Śiva ; the material and efficient cause ; the Tattva Mahat, first of their issue ; Creator ; Lord ; nescience ; destiny ; power of illusion and time. Niyati also is the Śaiva category of space.

⁴ Vide last note.

⁵ Brahmā.

⁶ Viṣṇu.

⁷ Śiva.

⁸ The author's rendering is free here. He writes : “May the creatrix of the universe who is worshipped by Śiva preserve the three worlds.”

thought, 'How can that supreme and most abstruse truth¹ be known to me which is not known to even Maheśvara of vast knowledge?' So thinking, and finding no other means, Vyāsa of great intelligence set his whole-hearted devotion² on Durgā, went to the Himālaya, and there practised severe austerities. The consort of Śiva, who is ever fond of Her devotees, was pleased with such devotion and, remaining unseen in the sky, said, 'Mahāmuni Vyāsa, go to Brahmaloka where all the Śrutis incarnate³ live; there you will know my stainless supreme existence.¹ There sung by the Śrutis, I shall become visible and do what is desired of by you.' Hearing the message from above, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa at once repaired to Brahmaloka, bowed to the four Vedas and asked, "What is the supreme and undecaying Brahman?"

"Great Muni, hearing the Ṛṣi ask this question with modesty and submissiveness, the Vedas at once replied by turn."

Ṛgveda said: "In whom are contained all things, out of whom appear all things, and whom all describe as the highest Being,¹ that Ādyā (primal) Bhagavati is Brahman itself."

Yajurveda said: "The Īśvarī who is worshipped in all yajñas and in yoga and for whose existence we (Vedas) are deemed the authority, that Bhagavati alone is Brahman itself."

Sāmaveda said: "By whom this universe is moved, whom all yogīs contemplate, and by whose light the universe is manifested, that world-pervading Durgā alone is supreme Brahman."

Atharvaveda said: "The Īśvarī of Suras⁴ whom all who are favoured for their devotion see, that Bhagavati Durgā all Śāstras describe as Supreme Brahman."

Suta said, hearing the incarnate Śrutis thus express themselves: "Vyāsa, the son of Satyavati, became certain that Bhagavati Durgā was supreme Brahman." After they had spoken as above mentioned, the Śrutis also again said unto the Mahāmuni: "What we have said we shall make directly visible to you." So saying, the Śrutis began to sing in praise of that Parameśvarī who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, who is pure, and who holds in Herself all Devas and Devis.

The Śrutis said: "Supreme universe-embracing Durgā be pleased. The three Puruṣas⁵ Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, are created with their individual guṇas according to Thy will for the threefold work of creation, preservation, and destruction. But, O Mother, Thou hast no creator in the three worlds. Who in the world can therefore describe Thy qualities, impenetrable by the intellect of Jīvas?

¹ Tattva.

² Bhakti.

³ That is, the four Vedas incarnate (Mūrtimati). Literally, "possessing form".

“O Mother of the three worlds, it is by worshipping Thee that Hari destroys invincible Daityas and thus preserves the three worlds, and it was by holding Thy feet on His breast that Maheśvara was able to drink poison deadly enough to destroy the three worlds.¹ What can we say which will describe the force of that (incomprehensible) nature of Thine?”

“We bow to Thee, O Mother who art the body, the consciousness, the Śakti of motion, and other Śaktis, and the highest Śakti, constituted of Thy own guṇas by the instrumentality of māyā of the supreme Puruṣa (Paramātmā), and Thou art She who residest as consciousness in the bodies of Jīvas, who, charmed by Thy māyā and with differentiating knowledge,² describe Thee as Puruṣa.”

“Brahma-tattva is that aspect of Thine which is devoid of all distinctive conditions,³ such as masculinity, femininity, etc. Next, Śakti is that primary desire of Thine which arose in Thee for creating the world. That Śakti appeared in one half as the supreme Puruṣa, so that both Prakṛti and Puruṣa are but Śakti in different forms. Both are but manifestation of Thy māyā. Even Parama-brahmatattva, therefore, is nothing but Thyself as Śakti.”

“Just as to a searcher for truth things like hail formed of water and yet hard, are known to him to be water, so to an inquirer into the nature⁴ of all things in this world which has its origin in Brahman, the latter has no separate existence from that of Śakti. Buddhi as Puruṣa, when realized as Śakti, also is Brahman; for Śakti is manifested Brahman.”⁵

“The six Śīvas, beginning with Brahmā, which exist in the six cakras in the body of the Jīva are, when considered separately from Thee, only pretas (that is to say, gross matter⁶ in regard to their individual functions). It is only when they come under Thy protection that they attain Parameśvara-hood (that is to say, become Śīvas under the influence of Śakti). So, O Śīve, Īśvara-hood is not in Śīva, but in Thee. O universe-pervading Devī Durgā, O Mother Whose lotus feet are worshipped by immortals, have mercy on us.”

Suta said: “Thus, sung in a hymn by the incarnate Śrutis, the eternal Mother of the universe showed Herself to them.”

¹ At the churning of the ocean, poison was one of the things which issued from the waters. As this poison was powerful enough to destroy the worlds, Śīva drank it, holding it in His throat, which made it blue. Hence He is called Nilakanṭha (blue-throated).

² Bhedajñāna; that is, knowledge distinguishing between Puruṣa and Prakṛti, who are, in reality and according to monistic knowledge, one.

³ Upādhi.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ If we realize Buddhi to be Śakti, and Śakti is manifested Brahman, then Buddhi is such Brahman.

Seeing Nārada, the great Devarṣi, thus engaged in prayer, Bhagavān Viṣṇu looked towards Deva Maheśvara and said:

Viṣṇu said: "Nārada, the son of Brahmā is devoted, wise and modest. Thou ought by all means to favour him, for Thou art gracious to devotees."

Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, too, who is ever gracious to the supplicant, said, 'Be it so.'"

Then high souled Nārada, possessed of pure knowledge, again questioned Mahādeva, the seat of mercy and Deva of Devas.

Nārada said: "It is by worshipping Thee, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the Lord of the Universe, that Indra and other Lokapālas¹ have attained high states. O Chief of Devas, who is the perfect, immutable Devatā whom Ye worship? Tell me this if Thou hast favour for me. If Thou wilt tell me by whose favour Ye have attained such high Īśvarahood, then shall I know that Thou art gracious unto me."

Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed, Bhagavān, high-souled Śaṅkara, the Lord of Yogīs, receiving Nārada's words in good grace, revolved all things² in His heart, repeatedly contemplated the lotus-feet of Śrī Durgā, and began to speak to Nārada the great Muni of the one perfect and supreme Brahman."

Mahādeva said: "She who is pure, eternal Mūlaprakṛti is Parabrahman itself and the Devatā We worship.

"That Maheśvarī is the sole Mistress³ of the millions⁴ of Brahmās, Viṣṇus, and Maheśvaras who are Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction, in different Brahmāṇḍas just as this Brahmā, this Janārdana, and myself, Maheśvara, are the Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction in this Brahmāṇḍa. Though really formless, that Mahādevī assumes bodies in play. This entire universe has been created, is being maintained, and will, in the end, be destroyed by Her. And during its existence the world is overpowered by Her enchantment."

"In Her own play She, in former times, incarnated Herself in full⁵ as the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati; She also incarnated Herself as Umā, daughter of Himālaya. In partial incarnation⁶ She is the consort of Viṣṇu as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and the consort of Brahmā as Sāvitrī."

Nārada said: "Chief of Devas, if Thou art pleased with me, if Thou hast kindness for me, then, O Lord, tell me fully and in detail how that

¹ Regents of the quarters, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛiti, and others.

² Tattva.

³ Vidhātṛi.

⁴ Crores. Each world-system has its own Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

⁵ Pūrṇa—that is, in such incarnation all the Vibhūtis (see *post*) of the Bhagavān are manifested, not so in partial (Āṅśik) incarnation.

perfect Prakṛti formerly took birth as Dakṣa Prajapāti's daughter, and how Maheśvara obtained Her who is in truth Brahman for wife; again, how She took birth as Himālaya's daughter, and how three-eyed Mahādeva obtained that three-eyed Devī for His wife; and again, how that Mother of the universe gave birth to Her two sons, invincible and six-headed Kārtikeya and elephant-headed Gaṇeśa."

"Before creation this world was devoid of sun, moon, and stars, and without day and night. There was no fire and no distinction of directions. The Brahmāṇḍa was then destitute of sound, touch, and the like, etc., devoid of other force,¹ and full of darkness. Then but that one eternal Brahman of whom the Śrutis speak, and the Prakṛti, who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, alone existed."

"She is pure, full of knowledge, beyond the reach of speech, perpetual, immaculate, unapproachable by even yogīs, all-pervading, untroubled, eternally blissful, subtle, and devoid of all such properties as heaviness, lightness, and the like."

"Subsequently, when that Ānandamayī became desirous to create in order to manifest Her own play of bliss, that supreme Prakṛti, though in truth formless, at once assumed a form by the strength of Her own will.

"That Devī with form was of the colour of crushed collyrium.² Her face was fair and as charming as a full-blown lotus. She had four arms, fiery eyes, dishevelled hair, and full and erect breasts.³ She was naked as space, terrific, and seated on a lion.

"She then at once created, of Her own will, a Puruṣa (Mahākāla) with her three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas. But the Puruṣa was even then devoid of unconsciousness."

"Seeing that Puruṣa made of three guṇas unconscious, She communicated to Him Her own desire for creation."

"Being thus possessed of Śakti through the communication of the desire of Mahāśakti, that Mūlapuruṣa⁴ created with delight three Puruṣas, according to the threefold division of guṇas—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas, and the three Puruṣas thus created were termed Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara."

"Still, when She saw that there was no sign of creation, the Devī divided that Mūlapuruṣa into two parts—namely, Jīva and Paramapuruṣa."

¹ Tejas.

² Añjana.

³ The Devī is generally represented as so formed. They and other physical features are the signs of the Great Maternity. See passages cited in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess".

“Prakṛti also divided Herself, according to Her own will, into three parts—namely, Māyā, Vidyā, and Paramā.”

“Of these Māyā is She who charms Jīvas and is the Śakti who creates the Samsāra. Paramā is the Śakti, full of consciousness and life, who is the cause of movements in Jīvas, and Vidyā is She who is made of pure spiritual knowledge and who is the Śakti which dissolves the samsāra.”

Māyāvṛto hi jīvastāṅ paramāṅ nekṣate mune
 Tābhyāṅ samāśritāstespī puruṣā viṣayaīṣiṇah
 Babhūburmuniṣārddūla mugdhāstanmāyayā tadā
 Sā tṛtīyā parā vidyā pañcadhā yābhavat svayam
 Gangā durgā ca sāvitrī lakṣmīṣchaiva sarasvatī
 Sā prāha prakṛtirvidyā brahmaviṣṇumaheśvarān
 Pratyakṣagā jagadhātṛī viniyojya pṛthak pṛthak
 Sṛṣṭyartham puruṣā yūyang mayā sṛṣṭā nijecchayā
 Tatkuruṣva mahābhāgā yathechha mama jāyate
 Brahmā śrijatu bhūtāni śthāvarāṇī carāṇī ca
 Vividhāni vicitrāni cāsamkhyeyāni samyatah
 Viṣṇureṣa mahāvāhuh karotu pratipālanam
 Nihatya jagatāṅ kṣobhakārakān valināṅ varah
 Śivastamogunākṛāntah śeṣe sarvamidang jagat
 Nāṣayiṣyati nāsecchā yadā me sambhaviṣyati
 Parasparaṅca sṛṣṭyādikāryeṣu triṣu vaidhravam
 Vidhātavyam hi sāhāyāṅ yuṣmābhiḥ puruṣatrayaiḥ
 Ahanca pañcadhā bhūtvā sāvitrīyādīḥ varāṅganāḥ
 Bhavatām vanitā bhūtvā vihariṣye nijecchayā
 Tathāṅgśatasca sambhūya sarvajantuṣu yoṣitah
 Prasaviṣyāmi bhūtāni vividhāni nijecchayā
 Brahmangstvang mānasīṅ sṛṣṭiṅ karotu mama śāsanāt
 Sāmpratam nānyathā sṛṣṭirvistṛteyam bhaviṣyati
 Ityuktā tanmahāvidya prakṛtiḥ sā parātparā
 Svayamantardadhe teṣāṅ brahmādināṅca paśyatām ¹

[“O Muni! overpowered by Māyā, Jīva does not see that Paramā. Subject to these two (Paramā and Māyā), O great Muni, those Puruṣas (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva) also became at that time attached to the world, being influenced thereto by Māyā. The third supreme Vidyā is She who divided Herself into five forms—namely, Ganga, Durga, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī. Addressing Herself to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara separately, that Prakṛti Vidyā, the visible Jagaddhātṛī (holder

¹ The author does not translate these verses, an English rendering of which

of the universe), said to them: ‘ You, Puruṣa, have been created by me of my own accord for the purpose of creation. O high-favoured Devās, do that which is my desire. Brahmā, do Thou create with care all things, movable and immovable, of various kinds, diversified and innumerable. Viṣṇu, this great-armed Deva, the best of the strong, do Thou maintain by destroying all such as oppress the worlds. Śiva, through the tamas guṇa, will in the end destroy all this world when the desire for destruction will arise in me. In these three works of creation and the like do you three Puruṣas render help to each other. I, too, will divide myself into five forms as Sāvitrī and other fair women, and being your wives move as I desire. And becoming, with a part of myself, the female among all living things, I shall give birth to various beings of my own will. O Brahmā, do you, under my order, make a mental creation. At present no other creation should be made.’ Saying this to them, that Prakṛti Mahāvidyā, who is supreme over the supreme, Herself disappeared from the sight of Brahmā and the other Devas.”]

The following appears in the second chapter of Devī Bhāgavata:

“ The Paramā (supreme) Ādyā (primal) Śakti, who is called Vidyā according to Śruti, She who dwells in all things, resides in all hearts, destroys the bonds of saṁsāra, and is incomprehensible to the wicked; She who is ever visible to munis who meditate upon Her—may that Bhagavati, whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss—grant a pious mind to Jīva.”

“ She who, after having created the universe as sat¹ and asat² and jaḍa³ and caitanya,⁴ maintains it by Her own śakti consisting of three guṇas; She who, again, at the end of the Kalpa, alone sinks in Self-bliss after destroying the manifestation of this universe—I remember that Mother of the Universe in my heart.”

“ It is generally known that Brahmā creates all this universe; but those who are acquainted with the Purāṇas and Vedas say that He took birth in the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu. They have thus indirectly said that Brahmā is not an independent Creator of the world for He, too, has had to be born elsewhere according to another’s desire.”

“ For when in Mahāpralaya Viṣṇu lay on the bed of Ananta,⁵ Brahmā appeared in His navel-lotus. Here, too, thousand-headed Ananta Deva supports Viṣṇu on His body. How can Bhagavān be said to possess independent Śakti when He has to depend on another for His support? ”

When in Mahāpralaya the world is converted into a single ocean the water of that single ocean is undoubtedly liquid. All admit that a liquid

¹ True, permanent.

² Untrue, transient.

³ Gross, material, immovable.

⁴ Consciousness, moving sentient life.

can never exist without a receptacle. But Viṣṇu supports Brahmā, Ananta Deva supports Viṣṇu, and the water of the ocean supports Ananta Deva; but who supports this mass of water? Extremely difficult to understand is this matter. When, on carefully examining one receptacle after another, one comes to the end of all receptacles, then it is that there is disclosed the Supreme existence¹ of the Mahāśakti who supports all things. I make supplication to that Mother of all things.

"I make supplication to that Supreme Śakti, to that Devī to whom Brahmā, seated on the navel-lotus, prayed when (on the occasion of the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha) he saw Viṣṇu with His eyes shut in yoga-nidra."²

Again the following appears in the fourth chapter of the same book: Sūta said: "Thus, asked by Vyāsa, high-minded Nārada, proficient in the knowledge of Veda, spoke, with great delight."

Nārada said: "High-favoured son of Parāśara the matter which you ask me was, of yore, asked by my father, Brahmā, of Bhagavān Madhu-sūdana."³

"Seeing Hari, the chief of Devas, Lord of the world, and husband of Lakṣmī, rapt in meditation, my father was astonished and questioned that Vāsudeva, immersed in intense devotion, who is decked with the Kaustubha Jewel,⁴ holds the conch-shell,⁵ discus,⁶ and mace,⁷ bears the Śrivatsa⁸ mark, and is dressed in yellow garments; He who is four-armed, the cause of all Lokās,⁹ the Guru of the world, the Lord of the world, the Deva of Devas."

Brahmā said: "O Janārdana, Deva of Devas and Lord of the world, since Thou art Thyself the Īśvara¹⁰ of past, future and present, why dost Thou perform austerity and devotion, and whom dost Thou contemplate? This is a matter of great wonder to me. Being Thyself the Lord of all the world, yet Thou contemplateth another. What, O chief of Devas, can be stranger than this?"

"Sprung from Thy navel-lotus I am Creator of this entire universe. Thou art the cause of all causes. What greater Devata can there be in this world than Thyself? O husband of Lakṣmī! tell me this."

"Lord of the world, I know that Thou art the first of all, the cause of all, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of all, the doer of all work, and the possessor of all Śaktis. Great King, I create this world according

¹ Tattva.

² Sleep of Yoga.

³ A name of Kṛṣṇa as the destroyer of Madhu, the demon.

⁴ A gem secured by Viṣṇu at the churning of the ocean.

⁵ Śaṅkha.

⁶ Cakra

⁷ Gada.

⁸ A patch of white hair on the breast of Viṣṇu.

to Thy desire; and Hara, who destroys it at the time of dissolution, is also always guided by Thy words.

“Īśa,¹ it is under Thy orders that the sun travels in the sky, the wind blows auspiciously or inauspiciously, fire gives heat, and clouds pour rain.

“Being Īśvara of all, what Devata dost Thou contemplate? This I cannot conceive; for as for myself I do not see a greater Devata than Thyself in the three worlds.”

“O Noble-doer, I pray Thee, kindly tell me this, for Smṛti says that great people seldom make a secret of anything.”

Hearing these words of Prajāpati,² Viṣṇu said: “Be attentive; I shall tell you that which I have in my mind.”

“Although Devas, Asuras, and men know Thyself, Myself, and Mahādeva to be creator, preserver, and destroyer, yet Thou, versed in the Veda, know that it is through Śakti that Thou art creator, I am preserver, and Mahādeva is destroyer.”³

“In Thee exists the Rājāsī Śakti who brings forth the world, in Myself the Sāttvikī Śakti, who maintains the world, and in Mahārudra the Tāmasī Śakti, who destroys the world.”

“Devoid of these Śaktis Thou art no longer Lord of creation, I am unable to maintain the world, and Mahādeva also is unable to destroy it.”

“Vibhu,⁴ both directly and indirectly we are always subject to that Īśvarī of all. O Noble-doer, listen to an instance of this.”

“It is true that in Mahāpralaya⁵ I lie on Ananta as my couch, but even then I am certainly dependent; for subject to that Mahāśakti, I again awake at the proper time under the influence of Kāla.”⁶

“It is under Her that I ever practise austerity and at times freely enjoy the company of Lakṣmī, and at times I am engaged in terrific wars with Dānavas—wars fearful to all Lokas and oppressive to the beings therein.”

“Knower of Dharma, of yore, in that one ocean, I fought a hand to hand fight for five thousand years. You saw that with Your own eyes.”

“It was through the grace of the Supreme Devī that I was able to kill the two wicked Dānavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, intoxicated by vanity and born of the dirt of my ears.”

“Did You not perceive even then that the Śakti aspect alone, supreme over the supreme, is the cause of all action? Great Soul, who do You, then repeatedly ask about the matter?”

¹ Lord Ordainer.

² Brahmā.

³ And so the Kubjikā Tantra says that it is not Brahmā, but Brāhmī, who creates; it is not Viṣṇu, but Vaiṣṇavī, who preserves; it is not Rudra, but Rudrāṇī, who destroys. Their husbands are as inert as corpses.

⁴ Omnipresent Deva.

"She is the cause of all causes, created by whose will I, as Puruṣa, live in the one ocean and incarnate myself age after age as tortoise, boar, half-man and half-lion, dwarf, and the like."

"No one in the three worlds wishes to be born as a lower animal. I, too, did not of my own free will, take birth as a boar and as other lower animals."

"Who will willingly take birth as a fish or the like, forsaking the blissful company of Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha? What independent Puruṣa leaves a soft bed for the back of Garuḍa¹ and proceeds to wage formidable wars with invincible Daityās?"

"O birthless Deva, in ancient time, when the bow-string slipped in your presence, my head was severed and thrown off, no one knew where. At that time You cut off the head of a horse and had it attached to my body by Viśvakarma, the great artisan."²

"Since then I am known by the name of Hayagrīva, Lord of Lokas.³ That incident You saw with Your own eyes. Had I been independent why should I have suffered so much trouble amongst the Lokas?"³

"Know, therefore, that I am not independent, that I am in every way subject to Śakti, and that I always contemplate that great Śakti. Lotus-born Deva, I do not know of any truth⁴ superior to this."

Narada said: "This was told by Viṣṇu to the lotus-born Deva. O great Muṇi, the lotus-born Deva subsequently told this truth⁴ to me."

"Do you too, therefore, worship the lotus-feet of the Devī in your heart without misgiving, for the attainment of your object."

Sādhaka, can anyone who has no bias as regards Śakti and no malice also as regards Viṣṇu, if chosen an arbiter, ever say, on seeing all this evidence drawn from the Śāstra, that he who considers Śakti to be devoid of consciousness⁵ is a believer? In all ages, and particularly in the Kali age, the career of religious revolution is indomitable. When Caitanya-deva⁶ deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya families were on the verge of ruin. He thought that in the then state of society full of Navaśākha Śūdras,⁷

¹ The Bird-king, vehicle (vāhana) of Viṣṇu.

² Hence Viṣṇu is called Hayagrīva (horse-faced one). The incident is related in Devī Bhāgavata. Viṣṇu fell asleep resting on his bow. Brahmā and others, wishing to awaken him, induced the white ants, called vāmris, to bite through the bow-string. The mighty bow was released and cut off Viṣṇu's head, which was not found, and a horse's head was then joined to the body.

³ The fourteen regions. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Jaḍa.

⁶ The Vaiṣṇava Saint of that name.

⁷ Milkman, gardener, oilman, weaver, confectioner, betel-grower, potter, smith, and barber castes—middle-class Śūdras, as opposed both to the highest

incompetent¹ for either the Vaidik or Tāntrik dharma, Harinām Samkīrtana² was the best Dharma, and consequently he preached that Dharma.

In those days, owing to the degeneration of Brāhmaṇas in a society full of Śūdras and of the lowest classes, such Purāṇas as Devī-bhāgavata, Mahābhāgavata, etc., in which the greatness of Śakti is established, ceased to be preached in Bengal. Moreover, owing to the steady increase of the lowest classes through the influence of the Kali age, only such Purāṇas and Śāstra as are favourable exclusively to the preaching of the name of Hari, and mainly and elaborately describe the greatness of Viṣṇu amongst all Devas and Devīs, began to be read, explained, recited, and so forth. Although the teachers³ and Brāhmaṇas of the country proficient in Śāstra were in many cases worshippers of the Śakti Mantra, most of them were yet dependent on Śūdras for their living, so that in spite of their knowledge of the Śāstras in which the greatness of Śakti is established, they dared not bring them forward to the public notice for fear of thereby losing their means of livelihood.

Next, those who became Prabhus,⁴ upon the spread throughout the country of branches and sub-branches of the Caitanya⁵ community, have from generation to generation shown extreme partiality towards one part of the Śāstra, so that the inferences which they have drawn therefrom touch only that part of the Śāstras, and are alone revered as essential truths within their own community. It is these one-sided inferences of the Prabhus which have brought ruin on Bengal. Ordinary Vaiṣṇavas have been given to understand that the Lord is the owner of Śakti and that Śakti is His servitress, so that they worship Rādhikā with articles of food already offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.⁶ At the present time the book Caṇḍī, contained in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, which describes the greatness of the Devī, is commonly taken to be the Śāstra in which Śakti stands supreme. The Prabhus, quoting it as their authority, say that as one of the names of Śakti is Viṣṇumāyā, she must therefore be a great Vaiṣṇavī.⁷ It is thus because Śakti is considered to be a great Vaiṣṇavī, that modern Vaiṣṇavas do Śiva the favour of taking Him for a "Spiritual brother". Let Bhagavān judge their conduct. Here we shall merely discuss the Śāstrik evidence, on which the notion that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī is based.

¹ Adhikāra.

² Singing Hari's (Viṣṇu's) name with music and dancing.

³ Adhyāpakas.

⁴ Gossains, or religious preceptors of Vaiṣṇavas.

⁵ The Vaiṣṇava Saint of that name.

⁶ Literally, leavings of food partaken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It has been said in Caṇḍī :

“ Under the influence of the Mahāmāyā of Bhagavān, who preserves the samsāra, Jīvas fall into the pit of illusion,¹ with its eddies of ‘ mine-ness ’.”²

Do not, therefore, be astonished at this. Mahāmāyā is the Yoganidrā³ of Harī, the Lord of the universe, and it is by Her that this world is charmed.

“ That Devī Bhagavatī Mahāmāyā forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise and gives them over to illusion.”⁴

By Her is created this world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, when so pleased, is the dispenser of blessings and gives salvation to Jīva.

“ That eternal (Supreme) Vidyā⁵ is both the cause of salvation, and the cause of Jīvas’ bondage in Samsāra. She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all.”⁶

The Vaiṣṇava Prabhus here say that the two adjectival expressions, “ The Yoganidrā of the Lord of the Universe ” and “ The Mahāmāyā of Harī,” prove beyond doubt the subordination of Mahāmāyā or Śakti to Harī, otherwise, “ Why,” they argue, “ should Śāstra call Her the Mahāmāyā of Harī or the Yoganidrā of the Lord of the Universe?” What is known through another is surely subordinate to that other ; as, for instance, expressions such as man’s sleep, man’s intelligence, and man’s power indicate sleep, intelligence, and power subordinate to man.

We shall subsequently refer to the Śāstrik interpretations and inferences regarding the points in issue. Here it is merely necessary to understand whether Bhagavān’s Yoganidrā is a thing similar to your or my nidrā.⁷ Assuming, for argument, that Yoganidrā is nothing but the nidrā-śakti⁸ subordinate to Bhagavān : the question still remains, why, in the chapter relating to the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, and in which the power of Yoganidrā has been described, Brahmā, seated on the navel-lotus of Bhagavān, is said to have prayed to Nidrā instead of to Viṣṇu for Viṣṇu’s awakening? Who is there in the world so foolish as to pray to sleep, a thing unconscious, instead of the sleeping conscious person for his awakening? Again, the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha by Bhagavān redounds to the glory of Bhagavān alone. But why, when about to relate the greatness of Śakti in the Caṇḍī, does Mārkaṇḍeya, the great Ṛṣi, first

¹ Moha.

² Mamatā (egoism).

³ Sleep of Yoga of Īśvara.

⁴ Moha; and so also the Kālikā Purāṇa states that the Devī leads men into confusion, egoism, sensual desire, etc. She is the bewilderer (sarvamohinī) (Lalitā Sahasranāma, verse 137), bewildering the world with Her māyā (Kūrma Purāṇa).

⁵ The Devī (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ Lord of all Lords.

of all speak of the greatness of Viṣṇu as illustrated by the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha?

We deem it a sin even to believe that anything said by the great Ṛṣi, Mārkaṇdeya, can be tainted with the fault of superfluity. What, then, is the right solution of these questions? Some interpreters of the Caṇḍī have, with the object of arriving at that solution, devised forced meanings of the śloka concerned, and by their means endeavoured to establish the greatness of Śakti. But we say that a solution arrived at through forced meanings of the words of Śāstra can never be a right solution. Again, what danger has there appeared which is so great that the unsuspecting world must be deceived with forced interpretations of the words of Śāstra? What does it matter to you or to me if, according to Śāstra, Viṣṇu becomes supreme and Śakti His subordinate? In reality, what the interpreters consider to be a danger is none at all, but rather a blessing. None can become subordinate or supreme. What one is, one remains. Only you and I, through the perversity of our intellects, ascribe to Devatas the states of superiority and subordination to which we ourselves are subject, and, being thus unable to perceive the subtle Śāstrik truth,¹ we go down to perdition. The Śakti-tattva made of māyā, with which you and I are acquainted, is not the same thing as the Śakti-tattva superior to māyā which belongs to Bhagavān. The sleep consisting of delusion² and māyā, which we know of, is not the same thing as Bhagavān's sleep, which consists of constant consciousness. Just as you and I are overpowered by sleep, so your and my sleep is also corrupted by the corruption of non-conscious gross matter.³ But when Bhagavān is overpowered by sleep, His yogānidrā is that great Śakti which is ever awake and full of light.⁴ When a Jīva sleeps his imperfect sleep, another can awaken him by any means; for any sharp contact with sound, touch, etc., causes the Jīva's senses to ruffle the imperfect power of sleep and to awaken him by his own consciousness; thus you and I can awaken a sleeping person by calling or pushing him.

But not so with Bhagavān. He possesses all śaktis. No śakti in Him is imperfect. For this reason, while Jīva's sleep is sleep, Īśvara's sleep is yogānidrā. Your and my māyā is called simply māyā. But this māyā is called yoga-māyā. You or I can, at the utmost, be a yogī, but Bhagavān is the Īśvara of all yogas, and so His Śakti is Īśvarī of the Īśvara of all yogas. A Jīva can rarely acquire an infinitesimal part of that śakti by dint of yoga, but that śakti is eternally present in Bhagavān. Jīva is imperfect; so Jīva's śakti also is imperfect. Bhagavān is perfect; so His Śakti also is perfect. Jīva is constituted mainly of the inert³ principle;

¹ Tattva.

² Moha.

and so Jiva's śakti is also predominated by the same principle. Bhagavān is made of consciousness; so His Śakti also is made of consciousness. Your or my śakti of sleep is constituted of the inert principle, but Bhagavān's Śakti of sleep is constituted of the conscious principle.

Even when He is asleep, He remains awake; for while your or my sleep is merely constituted of the tamas guṇa, His sleep is superior to tamas guṇa, although constituted of it. For this reason, at the time of the great dissolution¹ the Mother of the universe assumes the aspect of sleep; and, taking on Her lap all Her sons and daughters from Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahesvara downwards, inhabiting the innumerable crores of Brahmāṇḍas, She puts them all to sleep. But She who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and supports the universe, Herself remains awake. When, after a whole day's play, the son stands before the mother in the evening, with a weary body, she at once takes him on her lap and removes the weariness by putting him to sleep. It is this subject² which has been so well depicted in the illuminating story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. After the great dissolution¹ when the world remains immersed in the one ocean, Bhagavān sleeps in Yoganidrā to the close of ages, shutting his eyes and lying on Ananta in the midst of that mass of water which deluges the Brahmāṇḍas.

Viṣṇu is the preserver of the world. Whom will He preserve when the great dissolution¹ is accomplished? When there will be creation again, then there will be necessity for preservation. The long period intervening is the time for Viṣṇu's rest. Viṣṇu plays till the arrival of the great dissolution, and instantly the son's play is ended the Mother lays Him on the bed of rest and puts him to deep sleep. Unlike other mothers, She has to make no effort in order to put the son to sleep. The universe-permeating Devī is Herself in one aspect sleep. In proper time She appears in that aspect, and lays Bhagavān on Her lap. He cannot, therefore, be awakened by being called like other sleeping persons. He can rise only when the Devī, who appears as sleep, frees Him from Her own tāmasik bonds. When, therefore, Bhagavān Brahmā failed to break Viṣṇu's sleep by all manner of prayer, entreaty, etc., He understood that that sleep, which was in reality consciousness, was not ordinary sleep. Perceiving that the mercy of Yoganidrā, the Mother of the world, could alone save Him, He began to praise Her. From the very fact that all the prayers, entreaties, loud calls, and the like, of Brahmā, with His four mouths, could not break Viṣṇu's sleep, it must be understood that sleep was not subordinate to Viṣṇu, but Viṣṇu was subordinate to sleep. Had it been Viṣṇu's sleep, it would have been easily broken; but it was sleep's Viṣṇu, and therefore the sleep did not break.

Again, in the place where Bhagavān is described as being tired with fighting with Madhu and Kaitabha, Śāstra says:

“Charmed by Mahāmāyā those two Daityas, maddened with the pride of their great strength, requested Keśava¹ to ask for some blessing from them.” What kind of thing was that charming by Mahāmāyā? The Caṇḍī does not particularly relate when and how She charmed the Asuras, and why the two Daityas also all at once asked Bhagavān to seek a blessing from them. In fact, although the greatness of the Devī has been described in the Caṇḍī, the description is very short. We cannot, therefore, get a correct answer to these intricate questions from the Caṇḍī itself. For this reason we shall quote from the Devī-Bhāgavata the relevant portions of the account which it gives of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. Seekers of truth will know from them the deep mystery which surrounds the story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha and free their minds from doubts.

When, after having performed severe austerities for a thousand years, and having received, on that account, the blessing of death-at-will² from the Devī, Madhu and Kaitabha advanced to fight with Brahmā in order to wrest from Him His lotus-seat, Brahmā prayed to Viṣṇu in great fear but failed to awaken Him. Here Śāstra says:

“Seeing that all His prayers were of no avail in awakening Bhagavān Hari, who was lying under the influence of Yoganidrā, Brahmā thought to himself that Viṣṇu was surely sleeping under the influence of that Mahāśakti. What will my sorrow avail, when the Founder of Dharma³ Himself will not awake at this crisis of Adharma?⁴

“The two Dānavas, puffed up with pride, have come with the object of killing me. What shall I do—where shall I go? There is none to save me.” Revolving this in His mind, Brahmā decided and resolved to pray to Yoganidrā with unswerving devotion. He considered in His mind that in the insurmountable danger which faced Him at the time, Mahāśakti alone could save Him; that Mahāśakti, under whose influence even Viṣṇu, whose substance was eternal consciousness, lay deprived of the power of movement.

“Just as a dead man does not perceive sound and other qualities of the things of the world, so Hari also, with eyes closed in sleep, does not perceive the prayers that I am making to Him.” When, in spite of my many and earnest prayers, He does not shake off His sleep, I know of a certainty that sleep is not under His control, but that He is under the control of sleep. He who is under the control of another is surely that

¹ Viṣṇu.

² Death only when desired.

or is young in age. Besides this, for five thousand years I have fought singly with you two brothers, who are both equally powerful. You have alternately taken rest. But from beginning to end I have fought singly, so that I shall first take as much rest as you have done, and then fight with you. Although you are strong and intoxicated with pride, you are in justice bound to wait so long as I take my rest. And after rest I too shall, as in justice bound, engage in fight with you."

Sūta said: "Hearing these words uttered by Bhagavān, the two Dānavas became assured, and, being resolved on fighting, sat at a distance from the field of battle. Seeing the Daityas sitting at a considerable distance, Vāsudeva began to think to himself how their death might be caused. In meditation Bhagavān, the Dweller in all things, came to know that Devī had given them the blessing of death-at-will, and, consequently, the hard labour of fighting could not weary them. He thought: Uselessly have I fought so long, useless has become my labour, and now that I have for certain known the truth, how can I fight with them? But if I do not fight, how will these two Dānavas, puffed up with the blessing which they have received, and who are the source of constant trouble to Devas, be destroyed? The blessing which Bhagavatī has granted to them is but little likely to be fulfilled; for even they who have most cause for grief do not willingly court death.¹ When even the diseased and poverty-stricken do not desire to die, why should these two Asuras, in the intoxication of pride, court death willingly? However that may be, I shall to-day seek the protection of Mahāvidyā who is Śakti and fulfiller of all desires; for, unless She is pleased, no desire can be fulfilled." As He thus thought, Bhagavān Viṣṇu saw Yoganidrā, the consort of Śiva, appear in a charming form in the sky. Thereupon, almighty Nārāyaṇa, the master of yoga, began to pray with joined hands to that Īśvarī of the world, the dispenser of blessings, for the destruction of the two Asuras.

Viṣṇu said: "I bow to Thee, O Devī, Cāṇḍī Mahāmāya, Thou who hast no beginning and no end, who dost create, preserve, and destroy, who grantest both enjoyment and salvation, and who art the consort of Śiva. Devī, I know neither your form with attribute,² nor your attributeless³ aspect.

"How can I, therefore, know the innumerable forms under which Thou appearest? Although it is impossible for me to gauge your power, this much at least I know, that I slept and was unconscious under Thy influence. I could not awaken, though repeatedly and assiduously summoned by Brahmā. Mother, because my five senses of knowledge, and

¹ The blessing is death-at-will, and as no one desires death there is no likelihood of this blessing being fulfilled—that is to say, of their death which

my mind, contracted under Thy influence, I became wholly unconscious. I awoke only when I was released by Thee, and after that I have fought much. This long fight has tired me, but failed to tire these two Asuras whom your blessing has made great heroes. When the Dānavas, intoxicated with pride, came to kill Brahmā, I challenged them in fight in any fashion they might choose. Since then I have fought hard with them in this vast ocean.

“But, O Giver of honour, who can dishonour those whom Thou hast honoured? When, after five thousand years of fight, I saw that they neither desisted nor were tired, then I came to know that Thou hadst granted them a wonderful blessing in the matter of death. Knowing this, I seek the protection of Her who protects all who are helpless. Mother, in the long fight I have become tired. O Destroyer of the foes of Devas, help me in the work of the Devas. Through haughtiness caused by the blessing granted by Thee, the two Asuras, who are incarnations of sin, have now become ready to kill me. Mother, what shall I do now, where shall I go (but seek Thy protection in this great peril)?” Thus addressed, the Devī smiled, and said to the bowing Lord of the world: “Vāsudeva, these two heroes can be deceived and then killed. Nārāyaṇa, I shall charm them with arch glances. Thus charmed by my māyā you shall, O Nārāyaṇa, soon destroy them.”

Sūta said: “Hearing these loving words of the Devī, Bhagavān reappeared in the field of battle in the midst of that vast ocean. Then, those two composed and mightily powerful heroes came to the same place and were delighted to see that Viṣṇu had already arrived there. They said: ‘O high-aspiring one, stay (we are two-armed), but you are four-armed. Still take the field of battle, knowing for certain that victory and defeat depend on fate. The strong ever win, but the weak also do sometimes win by chance. Wise persons should, therefore, indulge in neither joy nor grief in these matters. Enemy of Dānavas, many Daityas have, in former times, been defeated by Thee. But now, fighting with us, you are defeated.’”

Sūta said: “Seeing that the two long-armed Dānavas who had thus spoken were prepared for fight, Viṣṇu, with wondrous skill, dealt blows on them with his fists. They also, intoxicated by their great strength, began to strike Bhagavān with their fists. Thus they waged terrible war with each other. Seeing the powerful Dānavas thus engaged in fighting, Nārāyaṇa, with a pained look, cast his gaze upon the Devī’s face.”

Sūta said: “Seeing Viṣṇu thus looking pained and pitiable, the Devī (whose three eyes were like the morning sun) deeply reddened them, and, glancing at the two Asuras, laughed. Then, smiling softly, she pierced

and were as the five arrows of Kāma.¹ Sorely struck by the arrows of desire, the two sinful Dānavas, thinking that the arch glances of the Devī meant favour to them, were charmed. They stood motionless, regarding the transparent beauty of the Devī. Viṣṇu, too, who knows the purpose of every action, understood the Devī's object, and perceiving that the Dānavas were charmed, smiled and sweetly said, with a voice which sounded like the rumbling of clouds: 'Heroes, I have been much pleased with your fighting. Ask for any blessing which you may desire and I shall grant it. Formerly, I have seen many Dānavas fighting; but I have neither seen nor heard of any Dānava who can fight as you have done. I am, therefore, greatly pleased at the incomparable strength of arms possessed by you two brothers, and am ready to grant you any blessing which you may desire.'

Sūta said: "The two Daityas, who were overcome by lust, at the sight of Mahāmāyā, in whom all the world find delight, said, their vanity being wounded by Viṣṇu's words: 'Hari, what is it that you desire to give us? We are not beggars, rather we are ready to give to you. Know us to be givers and not beggars. Hṛṣikeśa,² ask for whatever blessing you may desire. Vāsudeva, we too have been pleased with your admirable fighting.' Hearing these words, Janārdana³ said in reply: 'If you have been pleased, grant me to-day this blessing that you be killed by me.'"

Sūta said: "Hearing these words of Viṣṇu the two Dānavas became extremely astonished and, thinking themselves to have been deceived, were grieved at heart. Then, seeing all the world full of water and destitute of land, they bethought themselves, and said to Viṣṇu: 'Lord of Devas, Janārdana Hari, you are truthful, therefore grant us now the blessing desired of us, which you promised us but a while ago; kill us in some extensive place where there is no water. We have kept our promise by being willing to be killed by you, and now you too keep your promise and be truthful.' Remembering His Sudarśana cakra,³ Bhagavan Viṣṇu smiled and said: 'High-favoured Dānavas, I accept your proposal, and shall kill you in an extensive place where there is no water.' So saying, the Lord of Devas extended His thighs and displayed them as a waterless place above the waters of that vast ocean, saying to the two Dānavas: 'Here there is no water; lay your heads upon them so that I may keep my word and you too may keep yours.' Hearing these words of Bhagavān in keeping with His promise, the two Daityas devised a plan in their minds and extended their bodies to an extent of one thousand yojanas⁴

¹ Deva of Love.

² Viṣṇu.

³ Sudarśana is the name of the weapon (cakra or discus) of Viṣṇu and means of good appearance.

each. Seeing this, Bhagavān also extended His thighs to double those dimensions. Madhu and Kaitabha were astonished at seeing such inconceivable power of māyā possessed by Nārāyaṇa, in whom all māyā is seated, and laid their heads on the two wonderfully extended thighs of Bhagavān. Thereupon, Viṣṇu of great prowess, rapidly severed with His Sudarśana cakṛa, the great heads of the two Daityas lying upon His thighs. Thus the two Daityas died, and the mass of fat which was emitted from their bodies covered the whole surface of the ocean. Because of this, the earth is everywhere known as medinī, and for the same reason (that is to say) because formed in mixture with that mass of fat soil is unfit for eating.

“Great Munis, what you asked me I have related truly and precisely. Wise men should worship Mahāmāyā, who is also Mahāvidyā. She is Paramā Śakti, whom Suras and Asuras and all worship. There is no truth¹ higher than this in the three worlds. This is the truth, the truth, and the truth again. This is the spiritual truth which the Veda Śāstra establishes. Worshipful is that Paramā Śakti, whether in Her form with attribute or in Her attributeless aspect.”

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS ŚAKTI ? (*Contd.*)

IN the case of the ordinary followers of the theories that Śakti is unconscious or that She is a great Vaiṣṇavī, we entrust judgment upon their opinions to the Sādhakas of these communities respectively.¹ Let them consider whether the above two classes adopt their respective conclusions because there is Śāstrik evidence in their support, or because of their inability to enter into the deep and weighty truth which the Śāstra reveals in the ślokas above quoted, or because they have not seen or heard of all this Śāstrik evidence, or lastly because, even if they have so seen or heard it, they do not, through vanity, care to take note of it. The above-quoted Śāstrik evidence proves that Śaktitattva is divided into two parts—first, māyāśakti, that is, Śakti whose substance is guṇas, and second, citśakti, which is above guṇas, and is massive bliss. By māyāśakti has this vast and variegated drama of saṃsāra been composed. In this drama citśakti appears as Puruṣa and Prakṛti who, though free from all attachment in their real aspects, as Jīvas perform this vast Brahmāṇḍa play. Giving birth to all things from Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, to the minutest insect, and spreading the manifestations² of Herself both as gross and intelligent substance,³ She pervades the world. If you and I were to understand the Mother's māyā, which charms the minds of even munīs, with whom will that Ānandamayī play the play of the unconscious world? Blind man ! should you be proud of your philosophical knowledge? False devotee ! If, in spite of your being an enemy of Śāktas,⁴ you deem yourself to be a learned devotee, it is not the glory of the Śāstra which will be in any way dimmed, but it is you who will be liable to punishment. You and I may hate or be malicious towards Śāktas and yet not consider ourselves sinners, but Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā⁵ becomes a Śākta, and says :

¹ That is, the Sādhakas of the same communities to which these theorists belong are a superior order of men, not likely to be swayed by such foolish ideas. To their judgment, therefore, the question may be safely left. The theorists are those who form the bulk of the Nāstika and Vaiṣṇava communities. Nāstika as here used means a person who thinks that Śakti is unconscious.

² Vibhūti.

³ Jaḍa and Caitanya.

⁴ Worshipers of Śakti.

“O Thou who art all things, how canst Thy greatness be hymned ¹ when Thou art the Śakti in everything, *asat* or *sat*,² which is anywhere in the world? Who can hymn Thee by whom even Bhagavān, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world, has been overcome through sleep? From Thee, Viṣṇu, Myself, and Īśāna³ have derived our bodies. Who is, therefore, capable of making hymn to Thee who art the origin of even Brahmā and others? Devī of unspeakable power, Thy own vast powers be praised : and do Thou charm these two indomitable Asuras, Madhu and Kaiṭabha.”

Again, Viṣṇu says : “Devī, I know not any form in which Thou appeareth, be it with attribute or attributeless. How, then, can I know the innumerable aspects of Her of whose form even I am ignorant? ”

After the war with Mahiṣāsura all Devas, descendants of Devas, and Mahārṣis⁴ stood before Kātyāyanī, who visibly appeared to them, and said :

“We bow with reverence to the lotus feet, worshipped of all Devas and Mahārṣis, of the Mother who has assumed form by the withdrawal of all the Śaktis from the bodies of Devas, and who has, by Her own Śakti, created this world consisting of things moving and non-moving. May She grant us good things! May Caṇḍikā, whose incomparable power and strength even Bhagavān, Ananta, Brahmā, and Maheśvara are unable to describe, resolve to maintain all this world and destroy pernicious fear! Mother of the world! Thou art the cause of all this world, but still Thou containeth three guṇas. From Brahmā to Brahmāṇḍa everything is covered with these guṇas, so that not even Hari, Hara, and others are able to penetrate this covering and know Thy true reality. For Thy greatness is unfathomable. Thou art the shelter of all things. All this world is derived from a part⁵ of Thee and yet Thou art above this world. Thou art unchanged,⁶ primal, Supreme Prakṛti.”

Advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious gross matter or force !⁷ O man! blundering Jīva as you are, will not your tongue become void of strength before it enounces your conclusions that that Śakti is unconscious⁸ whose nature even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara have described to be indefinable and beyond the reach of mind and speech? By constantly thinking of Prakṛti-tattva as “Prakṛti of the world” your mind has become void of understanding,⁸ and so to-day you dare call

¹ Stava or hymn in which the powers and doings of the Deity adored are lauded.

² That is, *jaḍa* or *caitanya* (*ante*).

³ Śiva.

⁴ Great Ṛṣis.

⁵ That is, God, though in the world, is yet more than the world.

⁶ Avikṛtā: that is, Prakṛti in the state in which no *vikāra* (change) has occurred as opposed to the evolving state of Prakṛti.

Mahāprakṛti gross unconscious matter¹, who is Herself existence, consciousness, and bliss. But have you ever considered Prakṛti-tattva in the light that "the world is of Prakṛti" instead of Prakṛti being of the world? Had you done that you would not have fallen into such a gross blunder as to the true nature of Prakṛti. Leaving aside philosophical theorems,² if your knowledge extends to even the root meanings of words, I ask you, do the expressions "Prakṛta-tattva" and "Prakṛta-tathya" ³ which you are wont to use, signify things false? Or do they signify things true? If the meaning of Prakṛta be "not true," what will you call Vikṛta?⁴ In the Samsāra there are two things, one Prakṛti, and another Vikṛti. That which is instinct with Prakṛti is Prakṛta, and the rest Vikṛta. Leaving out of consideration differences of gender due to suffixes, Prakṛti and prakāra⁵ are one and the same thing. What is one's svarūpa⁶ is one's prakāra; as, for instance, the expression "Of what prakāra is such and such a thing?" means "What is its svarūpa?" Svarūpa is nothing but another name for Prakṛti. For this reason, to explain a thing as what it is, an idea of its Prakṛti has to be given. In common parlance, therefore, what is a thing's Prakṛti is called that thing's svabhāva.⁷ Analyzing the word svabhāva we get sva, signifying self, and bhāva, signifying substance,⁸ Svarūpa, Prakṛti, or Śakti. In conclusion, therefore, that which is the Svarūpa of Self is svabhāva or Prakṛti. Now, tell me, O philosophical advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,⁹ is Brahman's Brahmahood, Śakti, Prakṛti, or Svarūpa false? If not, on what authority do you call Śakti unconscious?⁹ Brahman of eternal consciousness is, as you say, truth in substance.¹⁰ Unless Śakti be false, it can never be separate from Brahman who is truth in substance; and unless it be something separate from Brahman, who is all consciousness, it can never be called unconscious.⁹ The ultimate conclusion, therefore, of this theory is that it is the svarūpa tattva of Brahman who is all consciousness which is unconscious.⁹ Philosopher! praised be your knowledge of Śakti! Wonderful is your faith in the Supreme! It is from seeing and hearing all this that a Sādhaka has said: "Who knows that Kālī, the darśana ¹¹ of whom the six Darśanas ¹² do not obtain?"

It is by trying to understand Prakṛti-tattva, according to the notion that "Prakṛti is of the world," that Cārvākas ¹³ have become sceptics. Different is the method of understanding for the faithful.

¹ Jaḍa.² Tattva.³ Real truth.⁴ Untrue; that which is changed, transformed, or, as it is some times said, corrupted.⁵ Kind; nature.⁶ Own form; what a thing or person really is. The thing or person in itself or himself.⁷ Own nature.⁸ Sattva.⁹ Jaḍa¹⁰ Satyasvarūpa.¹¹ Sight.¹² Systems of Philosophy.

The faithful will understand that Prakṛti is not of the world, but the world is of Prakṛti.

The expression "Prakṛti of the world" conveys no idea to a man; for the world is of infinite extent and destined to last till the end of the Kalpa,¹ while the longest stretch of longevity for man is one lakh of years.² And he, although superior to all other worldly Jīvas, is yet liable to mistakes and blunders. The only wealth of man is his little intelligence and he is, moreover, oppressed by hunger and thirst, boyhood, youth and age, disease, sorrow, and fear. For man to judge of the substance of the Brahmāṇḍa is tantamount to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the sea by a shallow-water fish (that is to say, both are equally impossible). An Āryan Sādhaka desiring to understand the Prakṛti-tattva of the world will have to become a slave of the Mother of the world instead of the world itself. He must adore Her world-embracing form by seeing Her reflection in the mirror of the Śāstra. He must form an idea of the appearance of the son by seeing the appearance of the mother; to know the truth³ concerning the Brahmāṇḍa by sinking into the self of Brahmamayī. Those who have known the matter in this fashion have earned immortality in mortal life and laid down their lives as an offering to the lotus-feet of Parameśvarī! To say that Prakṛti is of the world first of all gives rise to the suspicion, in an ordinary mind, that if the world be nothing else than a composition of the five elements,⁴ then Īśvara, Devatā, Brahmā, Prakṛti, or Śakti—in short, nothing superior to guṇas, māyā, and the world—can exist; for Prakṛti is then what the world is. Thus scepticism slowly appears in the field, and to a sceptic's eye the samsāra appears full of only such things as are perceptible to the senses.⁵ But if, with the vision of the faithful, it is realized that "the world is of Prakṛti," no danger of such doubts exists, for whether made of five elements, or unconscious (whatever the world may be), there is no possibility of such qualities being necessarily attached to the self of Prakṛti, because of the mere fact of Her being known through the world. It is not necessary that the mother's body should resemble the son's body limb per limb. On the contrary, there must be some resemblance of the mother in the son. Similarly, whether the Mother of the world has anything in Her of the world or not, the world has surely some śakti of the Mother in it. This is the method of understanding for those who are subject to differentiating knowledge,⁶ although, according to the spiritual vision of adepts in spiritual science,³ there is no difference between the world and the Mother of the world. Again, to know the world merely in relation to itself we

¹ See *post*.

² 100,000.

³ Tattva.

⁴ Bhūtas; elements—earth, air, water, fire, ether.

have to know the world and the world's śakti, but to know the world in relation to the Mother of the world, we have to know the world, the world's śakti, and the great Śakti superior to the world. Although I am imperfect in the world, the Mother of the world is perfect, eternal Brahman. Consequently in order to know Her I must rise above the imperfect existence of the imperfect world and reach that most perfect existence in which all things besides Herself are imperfect and yet all such imperfect things are full of Her perfection. For this reason Āryan worshippers, the best of faithful men, are averse to respect imperfect knowledge at the cost of a disregard for perfection, or to discuss created things in disregard of the supreme subject for our thought—the Creatrix of the Creator of all created things.

Another thing. It is indeed a terrible mystery that you should, through perceiving the visible world to be unconscious,¹ have come to think that the great Śakti who has created that world is also so. If you consider the world to be unconscious,¹ I do not want to dispute the matter with you for the present; but I wish to know on what authority you consider the Śakti who works the world to be unconscious.¹ On the one hand, philosophers say that “although the Śakti of the world is unconscious¹ it appears as conscious owing to the reflection of the Śakti of consciousness² in it.” On the other hand, Brahmā himself says: “Thou art the Śakti in everything, *asat* (jaḍa) or *sat* (Caitanya).”³ In each of these statements both the states of śakti have been demonstrated but with this difference, that while philosophers say that it appears as conscious on account of its reflecting consciousness thrown upon it, Brahmā says that it seems to be unconscious¹ because unconsciousness appears in it (otherwise nothing is so).⁴ According to philosophers, the Śakti of the world is in reality unconscious, but appears as conscious because it reflects the Śakti of consciousness; and according to Brahmā, the Śakti of the world is in reality conscious, but seems to be unconscious because that state¹ appears in it.⁵

Now, whether the Śakti of the world reflects consciousness or unconsciousness, each of these views admits the existence of both consciousness and unconsciousness at least in the ordinary state of things, if not

¹ Jaḍa.

² Cit.

³ That is, in gross and intelligent substance.

⁴ That is, *asat*: that is, otherwise nothing in the world would be unconscious.

⁵ The meaning of these passages is as follows: Brahmā has said that Śakti is in everything, conscious and unconscious. On the next page it is said that unconsciousness is a false or māyik manifestation. Hence it follows that Śakti is in reality conscious, but sometimes appears as unconscious on account of the play of Māyā in it, and which Māyā also is itself nothing but a peculiar aspect of Śakti. Thus unconsciousness is but a māyik phase of conscious Śakti, and in this sense a thing which really exists; otherwise Brahmā's word that Śakti

in the state of spiritual vision. It is admitted on all hands in the community of the faithful that unconsciousness¹ has come out of consciousness,² and that the Śakti of the world has its origin in the Śakti of consciousness. "The world is all full of Brahman." "One alone exists and no second." "The world is all full of Vāsudeva." "The universe is all full of Śiva and Śakti." "There is no difference between Thee and the universe." "Hari is the world and the world is Hari." "When Hari is both within and without, what is the use of performing austerities?" If all these great sayings of the Śāstra be true, if He alone exists and no second thing, whence have come this unconscious¹ world and the Śakti of the world? In reply to this question, it must either be said that the world and the Śakti of the world are the Brahnavibhūti³ of that great Śakti, or that the world and the Śakti of the world have no existence. Otherwise, the singleness of Brahman or Śakti cannot be maintained. It can by no means be said that the world does not exist and again it is not the view of the Ārya Śāstra that anything besides and second to Brahman exists. It must, therefore, be said that the world, the Śakti of the world, or whatever else they may be, all are nothing but the pure display⁴ of that great Śakti; or, in other words, nothing really exists but the Śakti of consciousness.⁵ All which is seen as unconscious matter in the world, full of māyā, although it appears to be true, is not in reality so, but is only a display of error.⁶ Again, that error itself is a manifestation⁴ of Brahmasakti and that manifestation⁴ is called māyā. Of that māyā, consisting of three guṇas, the part in which the rajas and tamas guṇas predominate is called avidyā; the state which includes everything from pure sattva guṇa to the attributeless Brahman is called vidyā; in that vidyā again, She who is tūrīya śakti above all,⁷ and whose substance is pure bliss, is called Mahāvidyā. Overpowered with joy in love for Her who is pure existence, consciousness and bliss, the ever-joyful Īśvara of all has said in the Cāmunda Tantra:

"Kālī and Tārā are Mahāvidyās; Śoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmāvatī are vidyās; Bagalā, Mātangī and Kamalā are Siddhavidyās." These ten Mahāśaktis are Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās in order. That is to say, in these ten Mahāśaktis which embody perfect manifestations of the Śaktitattva must be sought the harmonious setting forth of Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās, in the above order. This is the meaning of the above quotation as it appears from the wording of the Śloka. In the Śyāmā-Rahasya, however, all the ten Śaktis have been called Mahāvidyās. "Kālī, Tārā, Śoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī,

¹ Jaḍa.² Caitanya.³ Brahma manifestations (see *post*).⁴ Vibhūti (see *post*).⁵ Citsakti.⁶ Bhrānti.

Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Mātangī, Kamalā, Dhūmāvātī, and Bagalā are called Mahāvidyās." In another place of the same treatise it has been said: "In the Kālī age Siddhi in all the Mahāvidyās is the best." Here the word "all," which expresses combination, and the use of the plural number, signify that all the ten are called Mahāvidyās. Besides this, in the Viśvasāra Tantra it has been clearly stated that "Mahāvidyā is preceded by the prefix mahā." For this reason all Tāntrik teachers are of opinion that in the last line—"etā daśa mahāvidyāḥ siddhavidyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ"—of the above quotation from the Cāmuṇḍā Tantra all the ten have been indirectly called by the general names of mahāvidyā and siddhavidyā. Hence, according to Viśvasāra Tantra, Kālī and Tarā are Mahāmahā-siddhavidyās, Śoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmāvātī are Mahāsiddhavidyās, and Bagalā, Mātangī, and Kamalā are Siddhamahāsiddhavidyās.

In the Chapter on the play of Śakti, we shall attempt to show, so far as it will lie in our power, what appearances of massive Bliss they have in the aspect of turīya consciousness. At present we shall discuss, according to Śāstra, whether She is māyā or māyā is Hers.

The Mother's name is Mahāmāyā, and this, too, is a mahā (great) māyā of Hers. Blinded by this Māyā pandits of unripe intelligence fall into the pit of erroneous inferences, and losing themselves in it, think that māyā is nothing but the material of the gross unconscious¹ world and that She, too, is māyā by whom that māyā is held, and who is primal, eternal, and perfect Brahman. If She too is māyā, then why has She the name Mahāmāyā? If māyā and the person possessing māyā are one and the same thing, if the seed and the tree are one and the same thing, then why should there be difference of conditions of names and aspects? In fact, wherever Śāstra has made mention of that Mahāśakti, with reference to the part of Her which is māyā, it has given Her the name of Mahāmāyā; and again, wherever it has made mention of Her with reference to Her Brahma-aspect, there also it has called Her Mahāmāyā. In both places the root-word mahat is the adjective of māyā with this difference that in the place where reference is made to māyā the samāsa² is Karmadhāraya³—that is to say, She who is mahatī (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā, while in the place where reference is made to the Brahma-aspect the samāsa is Bahubhīhi⁴—that is to say, She who has mahatī (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā. Just as the larva of a silkworm is both the instrumental and the material cause of the production of thread—instrumental because threads are produced by its will, and material because they are produced from its body—so Mahāśakti is both the instrument and the material cause of the

¹ Jada.

² Compound.

work of the world. She is the instrumental cause because, being will itself, She has willed to create the world in Her blissful true resolve, and She is the material cause because She has spread *māyā* which is her own *vibhūti*,¹ and out of it fashioned all things both moving and non-moving. That instrumental aspect is Śakti or Brahman, and this material aspect is *Māyā*.

In the process of creation also, in the body of the Jīva, the Brahman aspect is Ātma and the *Māyā* aspect is *antahkaraṇa*.² In the illustration of the larva of the silkworm itself there appears another phase of *māyā*. Imprisoned in the web of threads produced by itself, which it thinks belongs to itself, it remains for some time bound by them and yet does not feel itself to be so. In course of time its aspect undergoes a change under that covering of threads, and after a while that very larva assumes the form of a butterfly, rends the sheath formed of its own threads, and with its sublimely beautiful body flies forth, spreading its fine and transparent wings in the infinite sky, in perfect bliss, with an unfettered life and a free heart, leaving behind on earth only its rent sheath of threads. Similarly, the *māyā* aspect, mind, which is bound by the self-created threads of *samsāra* and is attracted to and crushed by that *samsāra*, controls, by means of self-restraint, all affection, attraction, and attachment of and to the *samsāra*, and is even while confined in the womb of *samsāra*, absorbed in the thought of the beauteous lotus-feet of Her who holds the universe in Her womb and dwells in the heart of Viśveśvara. Thus absorbed, its form changes of itself, unknown to the three worlds; then, in the fullness of time, it rends, with its own strength, the *māyā*-sheath of *samsāra*. Blessed with the merciful regard of the Charmer of Mahākālā³ and dispeller of the fear of death, it spreads its two wings of discrimination⁴ and dispassion,⁵ and taking with it the brilliant and shining Ātmā which then forms its body, the pure and *sāttvika māyā*, which is mind, becomes a Prajāpati (Lord of the Universe through Śakti). As Vidyā⁶ it rises above the universe and soars high in the infinite expanse of heaven towards the seat of existence, consciousness and bliss, which belongs to Mahāvidyā. The flame of the forest fire is lost in the orb of the sun; lightning shot from its region is lost in the body of the cloud of massive bliss.⁷ The broken cage of mind—that is to say, the body composed of five elements—is alone left behind in the *samsāra*.

¹ Manifestation.

² Mind, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). ³ The Devī.

⁴ Viveka, the power to distinguish the real and the unreal.

⁵ Vairāgya, indifference to worldly things.

⁶ Spiritual knowledge; as the soul which knows (*vide post*).

It is this phase of *māyā* consisting of spiritual knowledge which is called *vidyā*. By virtue of this *vidyā* one reaches Her, the *Mahāvidyā*, who is adored of all the world, and is the object of *sādhana*. *Sādhaka*, he alone in the world has acquired useful knowledge whose knowledge is employed not to earn worldly riches, but spiritual wealth or *Mahāvidyā*. In this vast sea of *samsāra* he alone is past master of the art of sailing across the world who has moored his vessel in the port of *Kulakuṇḍalinī*. Thus, O *Sādhaka*, the Mother is yours. Am I, then, motherless? Have I no mother, although the three worlds have their mother? Say then, O Mother, that you are the *Sādhaka's* Mother. Extremely ignorant and devoid of *siddhi* and *sādhana* as I am, what will become of me? Although a son of *Mahāvidyā*, I have, O Mother, been blinded and benighted by deep *avidyā*.¹

What, then, will be my fate? This vessel of mine is drifting down the stream of *samsāra* with the ebb of *pravṛtti*.² I cannot hold it back; I have not the power to stay it with *nivṛtti*.³ Nay, Mother, the vessel is unable even to drift on any longer. It is a small craft, and has, moreover, nine openings in it.⁴ The sea has, by constantly breaking over it, filled it with its salt waters, and has left not even standing-room. Now I shall sink, and that not to rise. Daughter of the earth's supporter,⁵ hold me, hold me, O Mother. There is no strength left in these my weak arms. Extend for once, O Mother, your two hands of blessing and assurance.⁶ Merciful Mother, turn once and look at me. My Mother, in this vast sea this witless, helpless child of yours has none else whom he can call his own. O Mother, Mother *Kula-kunḍalinī*, be a mother and take me up once into your bosom. Let this vessel sink for good.⁷ The *Śāstra* says that you are *Mahāvidyā*, because you can be reached through *vidyā*. But, I ask, how are you *Mahāvidyā* unless you can save the child of yours who is destitute of *vidyā*? Through my *vidyā* I sink.⁸ Now through your *vidyā* save me, and prove that you are rightly called *Mahāvidyā*. Let the vanity which this sinner entertains of having acquired *vidyā*, such a *vidyā* as has led to his downfall, be destroyed. Glory to you, Mother *Mahāvidyā*!

¹ Ignorance ² The path of desire. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ Cessation of desire.

⁴ The vessel is the body. The nine openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals, and the anus.

⁵ *Dharādhara*, the mountain.

⁶ The *Devī's* hands make the *mudrās*, *vara* and *abhaya*.

⁷ That is, let the vessel sink for good so that it may not have to struggle again on the surface of the worldly ocean of *samsāra*. Let it sink in Her bosom where there is no such struggle.

⁸ This is the state of *avidyā*, the state of being blinded and benighted.

Whether I have the power or not, you are the wealth which the world seeks in sādhana.

Sādhaka, just as mental Śakti, which is manifested māyā, is called vidyā when it becomes free from the bonds of saṁsāra and rushes towards the Mahāśakti with dishevelled hair ; so it is called avidyā when it forgets Her and is intoxicated by the things of the world—wife, children, and the like. In this connection we may cite the following from the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa :

“That Devī Bhagavatī Mahāmāyā forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise, and gives them over to delusion. By Her is created all the world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, the dispenser of blessings, when pleased, grants salvation to Jīva. That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva’s bondage in saṁsāra. She is the Īśvari of all Īśvaras.”

Again : “King ! although eternal, that Devī Bhagavatī incarnates Herself again and again in the manner aforesaid, and maintains the world. By Her is this universe deluded, and She gives birth to the universe. If pleased, She grants wealth and knowledge to all who beg it of Her. Lord of men ! at the time of the great Dissolution¹ this entire universe is pervaded by that Mahākālī in the form of a great destructive power.² She it is who at times appears as a destructive power ; She it is who again appears as the creation ; and, again, it is that unborn eternal Devī who at times preserves all things. In prosperity She is Lakṣmī in the houses of men granting increase. In adversity She becomes Alakṣmī for their ruin. (Here it may be objected, why, then, worship Her, if, according to men’s lot, She appears as Lakṣmī and Alakṣmī in prosperity and adversity in order to do service or disservice to them? In answer to this question the following is said): When duly prayed to and worshipped with flowers, incense and the like, She grants wealth, progeny, and other things to the Sādhaka who desires such things, and beneficial attachment to dharma³ to him who does not desire them.”

Again, in the following Chapter it is said: “Oh King, I have thus related to you the greatness of the Devī, which is the best of all things which man can relate. So wonderful is the power of the Devī who supports the world. Even as She holds the world under the spell of māyā-moha,⁴ so also the same Bhagavatī Viṣṇu-māyā provides it with vidyā.⁵ That māyā has deluded and deludes you, this, Vaiśya, and all other people

¹ Mahāpralaya.

² Mahāmārī, which generally means a great plague.

³ Duty, religion (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ The delusion which is caused by māyā.

who have the faculty of discrimination,¹ and will delude all such people born in future. Great King, seek the protection of that Parameśvarī. Being worshipped, She grants worldly happiness, heaven,² and liberation³ to men." Here, too, the Ṛṣi has in view two aspects of Śakti. In relation to the bondage of saṃsāra, He speaks of the māyā aspect, and, again, for liberation from that bondage he points out the Brahma-aspect for worship, and says: "Seek the protection of Parameśvarī." "She alone, the Dispenser of blessings, grants liberation to Jīva when pleased." "O Devī, a spell of delusion spreads over all this world. Being pleased, Thou alone in the world can grant liberation."

It is when the Mother of the world, in the aspect of māyā, appears as the deluder of the world that She assumes various forms, the variety of which is due to differences in sattva, rajas, and tamas guṇas in them, and it is then that She plays the Acts and the Scenes of the drama of Samsāra. Such forms are intelligence, sleep, hunger, chhāya,⁴ power, thirst, forbearance, caste and class, shame, peace, reverence, beauty, wealth, function,⁵ memory, mercy, contentment (inclination), error, intellect, earth, nourishment, brilliance, restraint, and other innumerable śaktis. At the root of all these forms lies She who is eternal consciousness, and who, again, is, as māyā, known in the three worlds by the name of Viṣṇu-māyā. It is a sight fit only for the divine vision of Devas. When, therefore, through fear of Śumbha and Niśumbha, they began to worship Her who dwells in the heart of Śambhu, they first of all showed that She was the Ordainer of the universe as māyā, and then made prayer to Her by calling Her "Saviour". So at the beginning of the hymn it is said:

"To the Devī who is Viṣṇu-māyā in all things, obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devī who is called consciousness in all things, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devī who exists in all things as intelligence, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance," and so forth.

It is here that the philosophers who advocate the theory that śakti is unconscious⁶ have given supreme evidence of their intelligence and learning. They think that all these śaktis held in the body of the Jīva are gross⁶

¹ Literally, "possessing viveka". This is ordinary discrimination which distinguishes one thing from another in the common world of appearance, as, for instance, happiness from sorrow, and not the higher form of discrimination, which distinguishes the "real" from that which appears to be such.

² Svarga.

³ Mukti.

⁴ *Lit* : shadow or reflection. (See A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess")

⁵ Vṛtti. The vṛtti of a thing is the work that it does, and therefore function.

śaktis. The Devas have said: "The Devī who is called the Śakti of consciousness in all things," "who pervades this entire universe as consciousness, obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her." The Devas say that She is consciousness itself, but the philosophers possessing so-called acute vision, think that She is unconscious. For this we cannot blame the philosophers, for of course nothing that they say is unsupported by reason. And the reason here is this: If She is not unconscious,¹ whence have the philosophers got such an idea, notwithstanding Her being intelligence, memory, and the like? What they say is, therefore, true. What difference would there be between Deva, Dānava, and man, if what Devas see as conscious does not appear as unconscious to the eyes of men? Whilst the sight of a lovely child makes the milk flow from a mother's breast it causes the lolling tongue of a wolf to quickly waggle. The form in which She appears before a person depends on the peculiar tendencies with which he is endowed by Her. Moved by fear for Madhu and Kaiṭabha, Bhagavān Brahmā made prayer to the tāmasī jaḍa-śakti,² appearing as sleep, and instantly that sleep, which robs people of consciousness, became consciousness itself, and, assuming the aspect of a four-armed Devī riding a lion, stood forth in the firmament. Philosopher, if you are a believer, if you have faith in the words of Devas, explain to me by means of reasoning and arguments why you understand this Śakti to be unconscious¹ Śakti. What shall I say to you? To Her alone I say, O Mother, in the Satya age you destroyed the Daityas Śumbha and Niśumbha by first spreading your vibhūti śaktis³ and then withdrawing them, but how much longer will you allow these Daityas of the Kali age to live! Or who is such a Sādhaka in this Kali age as can, like the Devas, bring You to earth with his prayer? I, therefore, ask, O Mother, when will such a powerful Sādhaka be born as will be able to sacrifice these Daityas before You, and with their blood make the current of your worship again flow strong in India?

So much about what philosophers have understood. What Sādhakas will next hear will astound them. The very remembrance of the thing makes me feel as if the gates of hell are opening under me. The Brahmadaityas⁴ of the nineteenth century have arrived at still another conclusion. They say that the Śākta-Dharma⁵ is a result of the coalescence between Hinduism and Buddhism.⁶ In sorrow for such things as this have poets

¹ Jaḍa.

² The unconscious śakti, whose substance was the tamas guṇa.

³ Kauṣikī, Kālī, and so forth.

⁴ The sect of Brāhmos, against whom the book wars, and who are called demons of the nineteenth century.

⁵ The religion of the worshippers of Śakti.

sung: "What do not people see when the sun sets! Innumerable stars shine in the sky, lights show their power in every house, and even the tiny young of glow-worms spread their lustre in every direction." There is nothing in what they (the Brāhmos) say which deserves a reply rather than mere ridicule. To-day the sun of Bhārata's¹ Dharma has, in circling round Bhārata-Sumeru,² disappeared on one side, and in the darkness which has ensued Daityas, Dānavas and Pisācas³ have made their appearance. Community of Sādhakas! this state of things will not last much longer. Ruddy rays of the young sun have become visible on the summit of the Sumeru. She who grants all desires Herself stands forth to reply, and, with high arms outstretched, says: "Fear not, fear not! Sit for one more moment on the vīra's seat of śava-sādhana in this great cremation ground and firmly continue the japa⁴ of the great mantra of the great Śakti. The sun of siddhi for the Tāntrik world is about to rise. She to whom the Tantra belongs says: 'No Paśus⁵ will remain on earth, but only Kaulas.'"

Even here the trouble does not end. Towards the close of the above-mentioned saying of the Devas relating to the aspects of the Devī, and while dealing with the māyā-vibhūti⁶ of the Māyāmayī, they say: "To the Devī who exists in all things as error, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance." But this expression of truth from the small hearts of Devas has found no place in the large heart of this little religion.⁷ A thief's wife may enter into the apartments of a queen and steal her ornaments, but on reaching home she is at her wits' end to know which ornament to put on which part of her body.

Similarly, the eclectic fraternity, which is bent on establishing concordance between all schools of thought, has, by purloining this statement of the aspects of Māyā-Brahma from the Mārkaṇḍeya-Canḍī, put it on the head of the new Brahman of theirs, which is partly with and partly without attributes, and have at last found, with utter astonishment, that "The Devī exists in all things as error." Horror of horrors! This cannot be. The Merciful Father can never exist as error; for everyone professing the "little religion,"⁷ is unerring and above all error. The Brāhmo has, therefore, substituted the expression "as good" (mangala-rūpeṇa) for the expression "as error" (bhrāntirūpeṇa). O what depth of learning! His knowledge of versification is commensurate with his knowledge of

¹ India.

² Mount Meru.

³ Demons and filthy and malignant spirits.

⁴ An allusion to the Tāntrik rite in which the sādhaṅka recites mantras seated on a corpse.

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁶ Māyā-manifestations.

Brahman! The Brahman who is supposed to be formless, taintless, and made of all sorts of negation, has nothing to do with whatever is frightful, horrible, oppressive, and dangerous, or with the darkness, sorrow, grief, disease, dirt, abomination, damnation, and sin which there are in the world, but sits still and alone in a formless abode of peace, selecting and gathering by Its side only such things as are good according to Brāhmos. Around It the infinite multitude of Jīvas inhabiting the infinite universe are consumed in the fire of sin, trouble, grief, sorrow, disease, and suffering. But Brahman, who is Īśvara and Bhagavān, and aware of their existence, takes no heed of them, but in hatred and disgust turns His face against them. Tell me, brother Brahmajñānī,¹ does not this bespeak onesidedness on the part of the universe-pervading Creator of the Universe? Brother, you take pride in your knowledge of Brahman. But what is the meaning of the word Brahman? The verbal root “bringha” means pervasion. What is all-pervading is called Brahman. Is it possible for Brahman who is all-pervading to be so one-sided as to be associated with what is good to the exclusion of what is bad, with smiles and not with tears, with heaven and not with hell—to be in virtue and not in sin? Our Brahman is a quite different thing; the Brahman of the Āryaśāstra, from which you have obtained the name of Brahman, exists as well in heaven as in hell, as well in virtue as in sin, as well in desire as in cessation of desire,² as well in good as in evil, as well in creation as in destruction, as well during awaking as in sleep, as well in Ātmā as in mind, as well in prāṇa as in the senses. It exists the same everywhere, in every molecule and atom³ of the innumerable millions of universes,⁴ consisting each of fourteen worlds⁵; It exists everywhere in unconsciousness,⁶ consciousness,⁷ and in the play of consciousness. It is She who causes bondage, and it is She, again, who brings about liberation. For this reason, after the killing of Mahiṣa, the Asura, the Devas understood that just as the worshipping propensity in their hearts came from Her, so the fighting propensity in the hearts of Asuras also came from Her. Just as She provided the Devas with Svargalakṣmī⁸ for their prosperity, so also She was the cause of the fatal night of Asura Mahiṣa’s death. When the Devas perceived this, they said:

“Oh Devī, who art Lakṣmī⁹ in the houses of virtuous men, Alakṣmī¹⁰ in the houses of sinful men, intelligence in the hearts of cultured men, reverence in the hearts of pious men, and shame in men born of good

¹ Knower of Brahman; here, a Brāhmo.

³ Aṇu and paramāṇu.

⁵ Bhuvanas.

⁸ The tutelary Devī of Svarga, or Heaven.

² Nivṛtti.

⁴ Brahmāṇḍas.

⁷ Caitanya.

⁹ Devī of prosperity.

families, I bow to Thy lotus-feet. O Devī, maintain the universe." It is because, as avidyā, which is error,¹ She can bind, that as vidyā, which is knowledge,² She can again remove the bondage. Otherwise, who is She to liberate who has not the power to bind? It can never be that while the judge will order imprisonment, the jailer will give release. Just as the judge's order is necessary for imprisonment, so it is also necessary for release. The Āryaśāstra is not so blind, so foolish, and so erring, as to be terrified on hearing that "She exists as error." The Śāstra therefore says: "That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva's bondage in samsāra. She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all! Although, according to prison rules, a prisoner can sometimes obtain temporary freedom to walk in the prison yard, such freedom cannot give him permanent release, for his hands and feet remain still firmly bound by iron chains. Similarly, although one can live in heaven³ and similar regions⁴ in consequence of having performed works of high religious merit, one does not thereby become free from the bondage of māyā. Unless Mahāmāyā, in whom are the three guṇas and who holds in Her hand the cords of the three guṇas constituting the bondage of māyā, Herself removes the bonds, who else in the world can grant release? The Śāstra has, therefore, said, "She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all"—that is to say, although Brahmā and other Devas are Īśvaras of all, they have to pray to Her, the supreme Īśvarī, for the removal of their bondage and liberation. She is the sole Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all.

The aforesaid physical śaktis—intelligence, sleep, hunger, thirst, beauty, memory, intellect, restraint, etc.—which appear unconscious⁵ to us in our ordinary vision, are not in reality unconscious. Just as light cannot be dark, so śakti cannot be unconscious. Different parts of the māyā-śakti which consists of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, can only differ from each other in so far as one or other of the guṇas predominate; for instance, the sattva guṇa predominates in śaktis like mercy, peace, beauty, shame, forgiveness, and reverence; the rajas guṇa predominates in śaktis of passion like desire, anger, greed, effort, intoxication of mind⁶ and vanity; and the tamas guṇa predominates in śaktis like delusion, lethargy, error, drowsiness, and sleep.

Of these, the sāttvik śaktis are always naturally manifest and conscious; the tāmasik śaktis are always unmanifest and seemingly unconscious, full of delusion, and insensible; and the rājasik śaktis are partly manifest and partly unmanifest, partly conscious and partly unconscious. On seeing

¹ Bhrānti.

² Jñāna.

³ Svarga, one of the fourteen regions (lokās).

⁴ Loka (see *post* and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

the tāmasik śaktis above-mentioned, a person may easily arrive at the conclusion that they are unconscious. But does he never ask himself, whence have these śaktis come? According to Jīva's destiny, from the very time that he takes a body, an inseparable relationship is established between him and the enjoyment of happiness and suffering of sorrow. The senses, the mind, the function of life and the whole of the Jīva's body are made in such a manner as to be suitable for this enjoyment and suffering. For this reason sleep is as much necessary to him as food. And according to this necessity She, as Jīva, appears both as enjoyment and suffering as well as sleep. If She does not exist as consciousness at the root of sleep, who, then, is its cause? Light in the moon, radiance in the sun, power of burning in fire, motion in air, coolness in water, smell in earth—these śaktis may ordinarily appear to be unconscious, but in reality they are not so. They merely seem to be unconscious. To admit that all these śaktis are really unconscious is almost to accept the atheistic¹ principle; for self-origination of material śakti is the same thing as creation, preservation, and destruction of the world by Nature. In the eyes of the faithful there is nothing really unconscious in the dominion of the Mother, who is made of consciousness. All the things which we know to be unconscious are, to the sight of wise men, nothing but emanations of consciousness from Her whose substance is consciousness; only, by reason of the incapacity of the world which is composed of the three guṇas to manifest pure consciousness, they are darkened just as are the sun's rays when passed through a blue glass, with this difference—that while the sun's rays and the blue glass are different things, in the case of this light the sun, the rays, and the glass are one and the same thing.

In the root She is all-Brahman; in the stem She is all-māyā; in the flower She is all-world, and in the fruit She is all-liberation. Brahman, Īśvara, Māyā, and Avidyā—these are Her four aspects. Dividing Herself into these four parts, the Player of the blissful play throughout the world becomes Herself mad in the intoxication of Her own joy—Herself taking birth, Herself dying, Herself dancing in Her own cremation ground, and Herself becoming Śiva in Her own corpse. She Herself enjoys the play. She is Herself Puruṣa,² Herself Prakṛti, Herself the spouse of Mahākāla, Herself attachment, inclination, and goal, and Herself the daughter of Supreme bliss. She is Herself māyā, Herself non-māyā, and Herself She who yields māyā. She is Herself vidyā, Herself avidyā and Herself the eternal Devī who is the object of sādhanā. Ask the Vedas, the Vedāntas, the Purāṇas, or the Tantras, and every one of these Śāstras will bear unmistakable testimony to this Her (monistic) character. In this śāstrik

vision of faith, a sādḥaka sees the Brahmāṇḍa-play in both Her aspects of vidyā and avidyā, and sits on the Mother's lap in both bondage and liberation. The world regards the bondage as due to māyā, but he sees it to be caused by the Mother. It then inspires him with love and a feeling of wounded pride. Softened by that love, and hardened by that feeling of wounded pride, he sits lovingly on the lap of the Mother, holding Her hand with his hands, which are bound with the bonds of māyā, and, overwhelmed with tender feeling, says : " Mother, what a mad¹ girl you are ! " The mad Sādhak Vilāmbara has therefore said, addressing the mad mother : " Is it for nothing that I tell you, O Kālī, that you were a magician's daughter ? Otherwise, why should you have enchanted the whole world with māyā-magic ? "

Again, the peaceful Sādhaka Kamalākānta has sung : " Tell me, what is bad and what is good in you. Some you save by granting them knowledge in the form of vidyā. Others you cover with avidyā and draw down into the pit of delusion. Many people say that every Jīva is Śiva. Why, then, does He who is ever joyful become destitute of joy ? Mother Kālī, I, Kamalākānta, tell you my mind. Some enjoy happiness followed by happiness, while others pass their lives in sorrow. " After seeing, hearing, and thinking over all this, one can only say : " I always seek Thee who art above māyā, full of māyā, universal māyā, eternal, pure, blameless, one without a second, and, again, the cause of the world's liberation through māyā,² the bridge over the sea of existence. "

Those who, on merely hearing the name of śakti, leap to the conclusion that śakti is māyā without understanding the three-fold division of śakti-tattva³ into vidyā, avidyā, and paramā, and without knowing the difference between māyā-śakti and Brahma-śakti—to them it is needless to show any evidence other than the words of that Māyā and professor of Māyā; for these words are sufficient. When the Mother of the world was born of the womb of Menakā in the house of Himālaya, the King of mountains was astonished at the sight of Her form possessing the lustre of a crore⁴ of suns, bearing on Her head the crescent moon, large-eyed, and eight-armed and, bowing down to the earth before Her, with folded hands, and voice trembling with reverence, said⁵ :

¹ As pointed out by Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen (" History of Bengali Language and Literature," p. 119), the English word " mad " does not convey the meaning of the word " pagla," for in Bengali it is tinged with a feeling of tenderness, and persons so called are greatly loved. The term denotes rather a person of amiable and eccentric character, and is akin to the Persian dewānā.

² Māyā is here both the binder and the liberator (see *post*). As binder She is universal māyā, and as liberator She is above māyā. In what sense Māyā can liberate, is explained, see *post*.

³ Here meaning śakti.

“Mother, who are you of wonderful form, possessing large eyes and auspicious marks? My child, I fail to discover who you really are. Yourself tell me the truth about Yourself.”

In reply to this question put by Himālaya, the Devī said:

“Know Me to be (supreme) Śakti, the Genitrix of the world, under whose protection Maheśvara lives, whose substance is all aiśvaryas¹ and knowledge, and who is the cause of all activities and the ordainer of creation, preservation, and destruction. I dwell in the hearts of all things; I carry men across the sea of saṃsāra; I am eternal bliss; I am eternal, Brahman in substance and Īśvarī.² Father, pleased with the austerities³ practised by you and mother Menakā, and worshipped as daughter by you both, I have, through your wonderful good fortune, taken birth in your house.” Here, also, She has described Herself as parama-śakti,⁴ above māyā.

Again, in the same book,⁵ where reincarnation is dealt with, She says:

“On coming out of the mother’s womb, Jīva is deluded by my māyā, and forgets the pains it suffered therein.”

“Father, for his liberation from the chains of body a seeker of salvation should contemplate me as blameless, subtle, beyond the reach of speech, pure, attributeless, transcendently luminous, all-pervading, the sole cause of creation, preservation, and destruction, without a second, without beginning, whose substance is existence, consciousness and bliss.”

“Great King, deluded by my māyā, Jivas fail to know that supreme and undecreasing form of mine which is in everything and is without a second. But those who worship Me with devotion cross the great sea of this māyā.”

Himālaya also himself says: “Do not delude me any longer with Thy supreme māyā. O Īśvarī of the universe, I bow to Thee.”

In the Devī Bhāgavata, and other books also, the same thing has been said. Now tell me, O advocate of the māyā theory! If Śakti Herself is nothing but māyā, what is that other māyā which She specifies as “my māyā”?

The following appears in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra⁶:

“The Devī asked: What is the form of Mahākālī who is the origin of mahat⁷ and other tattvas; who is subtler than the subtlest, greatly luminous, and the primal Śakti? Form is possible in only such things as are the work of Prakṛti. But She is above Prakṛti, and supreme beyond all. Deva, be pleased to dispel thoroughly this doubt from my mind.”

¹ Qualities of lordship of Īśvara (see *post*).

² Ruler.

³ Tapas (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Supreme Śakti.

⁵ Chap. xvii..

Now, if She is merely Prakṛti, why, then, does the Devī say that it is not possible for Her to have a form originated from Prakṛti? ¹

In the Kulārṇava Tantra, Mahādeva says to the Devī: "He who is deluded by Thy māyā sees not while he sees, understands not while he hears, and knows not the truth ² while he reads."

(Here, also, if the Devī is only māyā, why, then, does Mahādeva say "Thy māyā?") The Śāstra says that She is māyā, whose substance is māyā, and who is yet above māyā. Advocate of the māyā-theory! forget for once the māyā of māyā and be charmed by the māyā of the Mother. Know this māyā to be not māyā only, but the Mother's māyā—seeing the māyā-play of the Mother sink in the sweetness of māyā. It is because this māyā exists that as children of the Mother we strive to sit on the lap of the Mother. It is with reference to this māyā-theory that in Gītānjali ³ it is said: "The Vedas say that all efforts are in vain; for, O brother, everything is māyā. The Tantras say that Mahāmāyā smiles through māyā, for it is the Mother's māyā."

Viewed with a little discrimination, the very māyā which is nothing but the cause of bondage in saṁsāra appears as attractive as an elysium of bliss. Cannot the very same māyā, by the influence of which we become attached and bound in love to father, mother, wife, children, etc., also liberate us, if through it we become attached by love to the Mother who is all full of māyā? It is because this māyā exists that there exists the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. Once the tie of this māyā is broken, the relation between the worshipper and the worshipped will cease, as much as that between father, mother, wife, children, and the like. A devotee is, therefore, afraid lest māyā should disappear, and he should thus be debarred from taking the name of Mother. Although a jñāni ⁴ desires to be altogether free from māyā, a bhakta, ⁵ while he throws off māyā so far as the saṁsāra is concerned, secretly and carefully nourishes māyā for the Mother in the core of his heart. Leaving the saṁsāra of māyā, he enters into the saṁsāra of the Mother. All who live in this saṁsāra of the Mother constantly sing: "Pārvatī is our Mother, Deva Maheśvara is our Father, the Bhairavas are our brothers, and the three worlds are our home."

But lest, through the influence of the Mother's name, which is antagonistic to māyā, this māyā should disappear, leaving no means of

¹ That is, if Mahākālī is, in substance, nothing but Prakṛti, then it is but natural that She should arise out of Prakṛti and have a form. The very fact that the Devī thinks it impossible for Mahākālī to have a form arising out of Prakṛti proves that She is more than Prakṛti.

² Tattva.

³ The author's work of that name.

⁴ He who follows the path of jñāna, or knowledge.

⁵ He who follows the path of bhakti, or devotion.

protecting the self, I desire, while there is yet time, to take the name of the Mother to my heart's content; lest, when the Mother and the son will meet, there should be left no opportunity for the son to take the Mother's name; lest there should be for the rest of my existence an end to my taking the name of Mother—the Gītānjali mournfully says:

“The day passes; it will last no longer. How much longer, O Mother, shall I bear the torments of the bondage of existence?”

“To this samsāra full of māyā you make me return time after time, under the influence of māyā. My heart is rent; I can bear it no longer.”

“If everything in samsāra is possessed of māyā, then grant me, O Mother, that māyā in which the son knows none but the Mother.”

“Untie the cords of the present māyā, and tie, O Mother, the cord of that māyā by virtue of which the fire of māyā will not touch me.”¹

“Putting away from me the three-fold fire,² take me up, O Mother, on Thy lap. Let me, for the last time in my life, call ‘Mother, Mother,’ and then I shall call no more.”

“My life burns with an intense hunger. Give me, O Mother, the nectar of Thy milk to drink. The fire of woes burns constant and furious. It will not be extinguished but by that nectar.”

“O Spouse of Śiva, do not fear that if once I get that nectar I shall not seek it any more. Simple child! do you not know that the thirst for nectar is not satiated with the drinking of it?”

Such Paurāṇik evidence as has so far been produced on the subject of Śakti-tattva proves that it is from Śakti that the entire and universal Brahmanāṇḍa takes its birth; that She alone creates, preserves, and destroys it, and that She alone is the highest and the best, and the object of worship to even the Devas whom the world worships. Because of this Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, Sauras, and Gāṇapatyas³ should not think that Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun and Gaṇapati avail nothing. As a matter of fact, all the Devas who are worshipped according to the five forms of worship (pañcopāsāna)⁴ are equally instinct with Śakti; none is superior or inferior to another. When Ṛṣis have had it in mind to intensify the piety and devotion of a class of Sādhakas, they have described the character and play of a particular Devatā in a Purāṇa, and shown that Devatā of that Purāṇa to be the highest of all Devatās. So much is this so that in books like the Devī Bhāgavata, the Skanda Purāṇa, the Kālikā Purāṇa, and the Kūrma Purāṇas, the greatness of Śiva, Viṣṇu, or Śakti has been described in such a way in one part, and in such another way in a

¹ That is, instil vidyā in order that avidyā may be dispelled.

² That is, the three-fold sorrows (tāpatraya).

³ Worshippers of Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun, and Gaṇeśa respectively.

subsequent part, that the two parts seem to be mutually contradictory. The contradiction, however, lies in our human vision, full of differentiating ideas. It did not in the least exist in the divine vision of the great Ṛṣis, who were endowed with the non-differentiating faculty.¹ They say that the Devatā whose greatness they were describing in one place under the name of Kālī or Śiva, was Viṣṇu Himself, and that the Devatā whose greatness they are describing in another place under the name of Viṣṇu was none other than Kālī or Śiva. Questions of inconsistency, superiority, exaggeration, or false imputation, did not, therefore, at all arise in their minds. They revealed for the liberation and benefit of the followers of the five forms of worship, the manifestations² of Brahman (of which great Ṛṣis, possessed of divine virtue, had direct knowledge), in the course of their description of the play of the particular Devatās the latter individually worshipped. This point will be more elaborately explained in the section on "Concordance between the five forms of worship". Sādhakas will, on inquiry, find that Devatās like Śiva, Viṣṇu, and others, have been extolled immediately before or after the places from which we have quoted evidence on the subject of śakti-tattva. There is scarce room in the small volume of the Tantra-tattva for illustrations of every instance of this kind. It is only with the object of acquainting Sādhakas with the learning and intelligence of this class of precocious, avidyā-born, and matricidal monsters, who give expression to their malice against Mahāvidyā by calling Her māyā, jaḍa, avidyā, a great Vaiṣṇavī³, and so on, that we have said a few words concerning the Mother of the world.

"O Devī, nirvāṇa cannot be attained without a knowledge of Śakti"—this is the conclusion of the Tantra Śāstra. At first sight it would seem to mean that no Devatā other than Śakti has the power to grant nirvāṇa salvation. But if this matter¹ is understood in accordance with the purpose for which, and the manner in which, it has been explained in the Tantra Śāstra, there will remain no ground for any such conclusion.

We shall therefore quote here what the Tantra Śāstra itself has said in brief about Śakti-tattva:

"Brahmāṇī creates, and not Brahmā. So, O Maheśvarī, Brahmā is undoubtedly a mere preta⁴. Vaiṣṇavī preserves, and not Viṣṇu. So, O Maheśvarī, Viṣṇu is undoubtedly a mere preta. Rudrāṇī destroys, and not Rudra. So, O Maheśvarī, Rudra is undoubtedly a mere preta.

¹ Tattva.

² Vibhūtis.

³ As explained in preceding pages.

⁴ This term literally means the human spirit after death and before the performance of the Śrāddha; in the general sense, a ghost. Here used in the sense of a dead being.

Without the part of Śakti which they possess, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas are all without power,¹ for it is beyond all doubt that without Prakṛti they are unable to do anything by their own efforts.”²

Now it remains to be considered what is the true nature of that which is called Śakti. But here we are in a difficulty. All Śāstras have at the conclusion of their specification of all aspects of Her nature, merely said the term “Śakti,” and, after a low obeisance, retired from the field. How can it then be possible for us to specify the nature of that Śakti who is Herself Herself?³ The juice of the sugar-cane when boiled becomes molasses,⁴ the molasses when boiled becomes uncrystallized sugar,⁵ the uncrystallized sugar when boiled becomes crystallized sugar,⁶ and the crystallized sugar when boiled becomes sugar-candy.⁷ After the state of sugar-candy, the juice admits of no more condensation. Similarly, the consequence of Brahman is the Brahmāṇḍa; of Brahmāṇḍa māyā; of māyā Īśvara; and of Īśvara Śakti; that is to say, in order to know what there is in the cause it should first of all be seen what there is in the effect. To understand the truth⁸ concerning Brahman, it is necessary to understand, first of all, that concerning the Brahmāṇḍa.⁹ If the beginning, middle, and end of the Brahmāṇḍa is considered, the sole and final conclusion is māyā. In order to understand the fundamental truth⁸ concerning māyā, it is necessary to fix the mind on Īśvara, the possessor of māyā. And in order to know the fundamental nature of Īśvara, it is necessary to fix the mind on Śakti. Beyond Śakti there can be no discussion of anything.⁸ Śakti is the real nature of all things,¹⁰ but the nature of Śakti is nothing but Śakti Herself. The sun reveals all things, but nothing reveals the sun save itself. However that may be, just as the Śakti of the seed can be guessed by observing the fruits, flowers, leaves, branches, roots, stem of the tree, so we shall proceed to open the Tantra-door of the temple of Śakti-tattva by observing the process of creation, preservation, and destruction of Brahmāṇḍa, the seat of Her eternal play.

May the Mother of the universe hold the lamp of Self-revelation in Her hand, and showing to Her children, who are living separate from their Mother, the path leading to Her own Self, ultimately take them up on Her lap.

¹ Jaḍa.

² The above is from the Kubjikā Tantra.

³ Svarūpa: who is Herself Herself.

⁴ Guḍa.

⁵ Śarkarā sikatā, called dalo.

⁶ Sita śarkara.

⁷ Sitopala, called miśri.

⁸ Tattva.

⁹ The universe, or “egg of Brahmā”.

The word “śakti” is formed by adding the suffix “kti” to the verbal root “śak” in the passive voice. The verbal root “śak” means “śakti” just as the word “gam” means “gati” (motion). The philosopher would explain “Śakti-tattva” by means of discussion.

This method, however, has little pertinency. At the very outset the grammarian has, in trying to define the term “Śakti,” found himself at sea, and left the matter exactly where he found it. The root “Śak” means “Śakti”; the passive voice means the same thing as does the root—that is to say, “Śakti”; and the word that is formed by adding the suffix to the root is also “Śakti”. It therefore comes to this, that the grammarian has explained the word “Śakti” as Śakti, Śakti, Śakti; as if he has sworn thrice and said: “In the name of dharma, the word ‘Śakti’ means ‘Śakti, Śakti, Śakti’.”

Sādhakas will here see that, if the interpretation of the word itself has led to such difficulty, how much more difficult must be the interpretation of the thing denoted by the word. In the opinion of philosophers “mutual dependence” is a fault, but grammarians adopt it as the fundamental principle for safe guidance. The object of grammarians is to state the true nature of a thing in conformity with its use, while the object of philosophers is to explain a thing with a show of learning and intelligence. A grammarian will plainly say, The root “gam” means “gati” (motion); but a man, if a philosopher, will, with a show of keen intelligence, explain the same thing as: “Going is that particular form of action in which there is produced a cessation of touch confined to one place with a view to establish at the same time a touch confined to another place.”¹ The word “gati,” consisting of two syllables only is thus explained by thirty-five syllables. And one can easily increase this number by adding to the interpretation a few more “tva-tva-avacchhinna.”² But what is the result of so much labour? If a grammarian asks a philosopher, “Have you eaten?” the latter will most probably reply, “I have made food to go”—that is to say, “I have made food to leave the plate and be deposited in my stomach.” Again, when the same food leaves the stomach and returns to the earth as in vomiting, a great difficulty arises if this action, too, has to be named according to the definition of leaving one place and establishing touch with another. After all the trouble taken over the interpretation, eating, going, and vomiting become one and the same thing.

¹ Pūrvadeśāvacchinnaśamyoga bhāvasahakṛtōttaradeśāvacchinnasamyogānukulavyāpāraviśeṣogamanam.

² Limitations, such as “ness,” “ness,” “confined to,” etc., for which the Naya Nyāya school here satirized displays such predilection. It is commonly

To avoid this difficulty the clever philosopher has added the expression "a particular form of action," meaning thereby that every act of abandoning one place and establishing touch with another place is not going, but that a particular form only of such action is called going. Now, if it is asked, What is this particular form of action which is called going? the philosopher will reply: "It is touching another place with the feet." But in that case kicking also becomes going. One is therefore at last obliged to say that "going" is the name of that action which people call "going". It thus comes to this: "gamana" (going) means "gati" (motion), and "gati" (motion) means "gamana" (going). It is because he will, after all, have to die this death that the old and intelligent grammarian has at the outset accepted the death, and said in plain terms that "gamana" means "gati". But the philosopher will not easily accede to this. He will die the same death at last, but with a frown on his brow. This is what is called having too much intelligence. A philosopher's wisdom consists in puzzling the intelligence with a voluminous combination of words while he knows full well that there is no other means than "mutual dependence". It must therefore be understood that the loquacious philosopher and the sādḥaka who knows the truth¹ concerning things are not one and the same person. The fundamental principle of a sādḥana śāstra is attainment of siddhi, while the fundamental principle of philosophy is merely looking abroad with the eyes wide open. In the present discussion of Śakti-tattva we shall therefore depend entirely on Sādḥana-śāstra,² and have nothing to do with philosophy; for millions of systems of philosophy may disappear from view, but not the least change can occur in a sādḥana-śāstra.³ However that may be, what we understand from grammar is that, as in the case of "gati," there is no means of understanding śakti with the help of any term expressive of quality other than the same word "śakti". Considering the manner in which the word "śakti" is ordinarily used, it appears from the adjuncts of śakti in such expressions as intellectual śakti, mental śakti, mnemonic śakti, visual śakti, aural śakti, active śakti, vital śakti, etc., that śakti merely takes different names according as it manifests itself in different places, while in reality the thing śakti is everywhere the same. What is the root of the śaktis which are in the branch, the leaf, the fruit, and the flower? What is that śakti under the influence of which these śaktis disappear? And what, again, is that śakti under the influence of which they appear? It is universally admitted that the answer to this question is, that Ātmā is at the root of all these śaktis. Now we must understand what this Ātmā is.

There is a class of believers who, when they hear the Upaniṣads taking the name of Ātmā, become senseless with emotion, and say that

Ātmā is “attributeless and omnipresent”. On the other hand, there is a class of sceptics who take up the sword at the very mention of the name of Ātmā, saying that it is “a false and fanciful thing”. Put under the edges of the saws applied by these two classes of people, Ātmā has, in the nineteenth century, become finer and finer, and has ended in being something almost non-existent. It is only because Ātmā has an Ātmā of its own that it has not altogether ceased to exist. For this reason, in order now to find out the true nature of Ātmā, it must be rescued from the hands of both these classes of people, kept in a separate place, and viewed from there:

In dualistic vision cause and effect are two different things, but looked at from the monistic point of view, they are the same. That which is the effect is also the cause, and that which is the cause is also the effect; for what did not exist in the cause cannot exist in the effect, and what does not exist in the effect cannot have existed in the cause. The Śakti which does not exist in the seed can never appear in the tree, and the Śakti which does not appear in the tree cannot have existed in the seed. A consideration of the similarity between the seed and the tree leads to the conclusion that the seed is the latent state of Śakti while the tree is in its patent state. Similarly, all the Śaktis which appear manifest in life¹—the senses, the body, and the mind—are but patent states of Ātmā, that great Śakti of the seed. To say that Śakti resides in Ātmā is to present the thing in the form in which it may be understood by means of ordinary intelligence. The final decision of the Śāstra, however, is that in reality Śakti is Ātmā and Ātmā is Śakti. It is but a mode of speech to say that fire has the power (Śakti) of burning. The truth is that fire exists as power of burning and the power of burning appears as fire. We in our ordinary vision see only the material and gross aspect of fire.

The Śāstra has therefore called that easily perceptible aspect by the name of fire, and designated the power of burning as its Śakti (power). But leaving the material aspect aside, spiritually speaking fire is nothing but Śakti. Although the expression “My Ātmā,” used in ordinary parlance by worldly people, means, in reality, “What is Ātmā that I am,” yet, by falsely considering the physical body to be the person (Ātmā) we are wont to say “my Ātmā” in the sense that Ātmā exists in this my physical body. Here, also, if we leave out of consideration the physical side, Ātmā becomes nothing but Śakti, because no such thing exists in the world as the Śakti of Ātmā. That which is Ātmā is Śakti, and that which is Śakti is Ātmā. In many places in the Śāstra there is mention of the Śakti of Ātmā, but in all such places it is Ātmā alone which has really been spoken of, just as people speak of the water of the Ganges, the head

of Rāhu,¹ the refulgence of the sun, the light of the moon, etc., although, in reality, the water is Ganges, the head is Rāhu, the refulgence is the sun, the light is the moon, and so on. Just as, in order to express the power of Śakti, a distinction has to be imagined in ordinary usage, and expressions like “the water of the Ganges” have to be used; so although what is Śakti is Ātmā, yet authors of Śāstras have, in order to enable people to understand the Śakti-tattva,² often spoken of the Śakti of Ātmā; but in conclusion they have unanimously, and with one voice, said: “There is no distinction between Śakti and the possessor of Śakti.” In spite, however, of this absence of distinction, they have had, even while establishing such absence, to speak of two—namely, Śakti and the possessor of Śakti—in order to explain the matter to people whose knowledge consists of distinctions. Without two there can be no distinction, and without distinction there can be no establishment of the absence of distinction.

There is yet something more for consideration. What is the true nature of that Ātmā over which there is so much quarrel, dispute, and discussion? Why do we admit its existence? Looking at this part of the question we see that the body of the Jīva is unconscious, his senses are unconscious, and even his mind is almost so, for although the mind possesses a little of consciousness, it cannot exist independently and supported by itself. It is, therefore, a subject for consideration under whose subjection all these dependent things exist. This matter has been very clearly decided in the form of a question in the Kena Upaniṣad. There it is asked, By what are the senses of work, the senses of knowledge, mind, intellect, etc., able to perform their respective functions? What is the true nature of Him who is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life, the mind of the mind? He has been called “the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life,” but not the Ātmā of the Ātmā; because if the nature³ of Ātmā is decided first of all, the question “By what?” cannot at all arise. For that is the final point, the ultimate goal. However that may be, after all these questions the Kena Upaniṣad goes on to say: “Indra, Candra,⁴ Vāyu,⁵ Varuṇa,⁶ Agni,⁷ and other Devas who preside over the senses in the Jīva’s body were directing the working of the universe with their various powers and boasting of their victory over Asuras, when suddenly a mass of indescribable brilliance⁸ appeared before them. Unable to make out what that enormously powerful mass of light was, Agni and other Devas, deputed by Indra, went over one by one to It and were asked by It who they were. First of all Agni said that he was Agni

¹ One of the navagrahas (planets).

² Subject of or principle concerning Śakti.

³ Tattva.

⁴ Moon.

⁵ Air.

(fire) and Jātaveda,¹ and that he could burn the whole world. Thereupon that Devatā made of light, placed before Agni a blade of grass and said, "Burn it." Agni tried his best but failed to burn the grass.

Subsequently, after Vāyu and other Devas had been equally put to shame and had returned, Indra himself went, but in an instant that Devatā, the refulgent mass of light, disappeared. Seeing the mass of light disappear, Indra understood that It had disappeared because, although He was the ruler of the three worlds, He was yet not a fit person even to approach that Devatā. Thus shattering the pride of Indra, She, who is perfect Brahman and eternal, assumed the fairest form of Gaurī and appeared before the Devas, illumining the firmament with Her lustre. Then, when the Lord of Devas² questioned Her about Her real nature, She replied. . . .

We are unable to divulge Her reply to the public, for that is Upaniṣad. We shall, however, quote, from the elaborate account of this subject given in the Devī Bhāgavata, that portion in which the Devī's reply is contained. From this sādhakas will know Her real nature.

The Devī said: "This aspect of mine is Brahman in reality, the cause of all causes, the seat of māyā, witness to all and free from all defect. Divided into two parts, I create the entire world. One of these parts is Sacchidānanda-Prakṛti and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti. That māyā is my Parama³ Śakti, and I am the Īśvarī who possesses that Śakti. But just as moonlight is not distinct from the moon, so I am not distinct from māyā. O Lord of Devas! during the dissolution⁴ of the whole world this māyā exists inseparable from me in a state of equilibrium, and again, in consequence of the past karma of Jīvas, this unmanifested māyā becomes manifest. The aspect of Śakti, in which She is inward looking, is called 'māyā,' and that in which She is outward looking is called 'avidyā'. It was from tamas, the outward-looking avidyā, that sattva, rajas, and tamas, the three guṇas, appeared at the beginning of creation, and from that threefold division appeared Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. The rajas guṇa predominates in Brahmā, the sattva guṇa in Viṣṇu, and the tamas guṇa in Rudra, who is the embodiment of all causes.⁵

¹ A Vaidik name for Agni. The word means "known by all things that are born," or "known as it is born" (spreads) (Sāyana's commentary on Rgveda).

² Indra.

³ Supreme.

⁴ Pralaya.

⁵ The Bengali word is "Kāraṇa". All effects lie in a potential state in their causes. This potential state represents tamas guṇa. Rudra, in whom

“In this Brahmāṇḍa (which is but a manifestation of avidyā consisting of tamas) Brahmā is like my gross¹ body, Viṣṇu is like my linga² body, Rudra is like my causal³ body, and I myself am turīya caitanya.⁴ It is in my state of equipoise that I reside in all things. Beyond that, I am Parabrahman, devoid of form. I have two aspects, according as I am with and without attributes. The aspect which is above māyā is attributeless, and the aspect with māyā is with attributes. Thus, possessing two aspects, I create the world as Māyā, enter into it as Brahman, and send Jīvas along their respective paths, whether good or bad, according to law and karma.”⁵

“It is I, again, who appoint Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara to do the work of creation, preservation, and destruction of the three worlds. It is out of fear of me⁶ that the wind blows, the sun rises and sets, Indra gives rain, fire burns, and death takes the lives of Jīvas. For this reason I am called ‘the best of all’ (sarvottama), ‘the ruler of all’ (sarveśvari.) It is through my grace that ye triumph in all things. Ye are but puppets in my hand. Being will in substance, I ever act according to my own will, and according to your karma I grant victory at one time to you, and at another to Asuras. Through pride, and overpowered by intense delusion, you forgot me, the dweller in all things. For this reason, in order to favour ye, my energy,⁷ the Śakti, which is ‘the best of all,’ emerged from out of your bodies and appeared before you as what you thought to be a Yakṣa.”⁸ (That is to say, separated from that great Śakti, you failed to recognize your individual Śaktis and also were unable to do the works for which you are appointed in the world.)

“Henceforward, by all means shake off pride and seek the protection of me, who am existence, consciousness, and bliss.” (That is to say, knowing me to be the controller of all, attribute the fruits of all works, done or undone, to the full exercise of my great Śakti, and be gratified on thus resigning yourselves to me.)

Ādyā-Śakti (primal Śakti) says: “Divided into two parts, I create. One of these parts is Sacchhidānanda-Prakṛti, and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti.” Again, when māyā is Her Śakti She is the Īśvarī possessing Śakti. Spiritually speaking, Śakti is not different from Her, just as moonlight is not different from the moon. It is the said part which is pure Sacchhidānanda which has been designated as Ātmā in all Śāstras. The body, the senses, the mind, the life, all are subordinate to Him, all

¹ Sthūla.

² Subtle body.

³ Kāraṇa.

⁴ Consciousness in its fourth state (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁶ That is, in obedience to me.

⁷ Tejas.

functions are within His control; for all things in the body are unconscious and that Ātmā which is consciousness is the sole cause of their being possessed of consciousness.

Just as the sun is the only source of all light during the day, so Ātmā is the only source of all physical consciousness. As the sun is not a different thing from its light, so Ātmā is not a different thing from Śakti or consciousness. The ultimate point to which ātmā-tattva¹ leads is, therefore, Citśakti.² What we know as consciousness is called Śakti. In explaining the word Śakti it may finally be said that Śakti is that thing which makes able—that is to say, that power by virtue of which the body, the senses, the mind, and the prāṇa,³ which are all unconscious,⁴ become able to act like conscious things. It is because Śakti is universe-pervading that its other name is Ātmā. What pervades is Ātmā; He who pervades all is called Ātmā.

In the driving of a carriage we see that the carriage, the driver of the carriage, the person driven, and the horse, all four in fact, are in motion. Of these four, only one is independent and conscious, two are dependent and conscious, and the remaining one, though itself unconscious, is drawn like a conscious thing. The horse, though conscious, is under the control of the driver; the driver, though conscious, is under the control of the person driven; and the carriage, though itself unconscious, is successively under the control of all three—viz., the person driven, the driver, and the horse. Sādhakas constantly see such a carriage-driving within their bodies. The body composed of five elements is nothing but a carriage for carrying a person in and out on this journey of saṃsāra. The ten senses are its ten horses, the mind is its driver, and Ātmā, that great Śakti, is the person driven. Just as the driver guides the horses according to the directions of the person driven, so the mind also, urged by the Śakti of Ātmā, sends the senses to their individual pursuits.

As the carriage runs drawn by the horse, the body moves drawn by the senses. The mind and the senses are both conscious under the influence of the consciousness of Ātmā. In all the pursuits of the senses the body appears as conscious. The body is subordinate to the senses, the senses are subordinate to the mind, the mind is subordinate to Ātmā. Of the four, therefore, three are dependent, and only Ātmā is independent, all the others being subordinate to Him. There is, however, this peculiarity here, that, unlike the ordinary person, seated in a carriage, the person who is driven in the carriage of the body does not travel along any path fixed by Him; He simply orders the driver to drive the carriage

¹ The discussion of the Ātmā—spiritual science.

² Consciousness is the ultimate Śakti.

³ Vital principle.

and then retires. The driver is left to choose whichever path he likes, and to enjoy or suffer from the comforts and discomforts of the path on which his choice may fall. The person driven has neither comfort nor discomfort. Ātmā is ever free from attachment.

The driver may, with unerring discretion, take the carriage safely through the paths of sin and virtue which the Śāstra indicates; but if he is weak, there is danger for him. The ten wayward horses draw the carriage in ten different directions and, consequently, the small carriage, built with five pieces of wood¹ and full of innumerable joints, breaks down in mid-path. Besides this, the hero who has taken charge of driving the carriage is hardly able to control himself, not to speak of controlling the horses. He has a dread of the two reins śama and dama,² which are prescribed for controlling the horses. Even the thought of them often greatly frightens him, and, in many cases, he is of opinion that the idea of handling and using them in tightening or loosening the hold on the horses, is but an incredible fancy. It is owing to such weakness on the part of the driver that in the hunt for happiness in the saṁsāra, Jīva so often forgets his aim.

It is here in the saṁsāra that the terrible catastrophe begins. Although the driver is weak, he can cast his eyes towards the person sitting in the carriage, and then, forgetting fatalism,³ one becomes inclined to say: "O Mother! what play is this of yours? The strength and intelligence of the driver are not unknown to You; why, then knowing everything, have You placed the carriage in charge of such a worthless driver? True it is that I am a great sinner, but for that You cannot abandon me. In this great crisis neither the driver nor the person driven⁴ can save himself. I know that I must suffer the fruits of my own karma; but still, O Mother! I desire to see You once in this broken carriage⁵ of mine."

"As in Rāvaṇa's last drive in a carriage, so in this last drive of mine appear for once, O Mother! mad and shouting, 'Fear not! fear not!'. Stand in the carriage, holding me to Thy bosom. Do not disappear, but appear for a moment in my heart, so that I can for once see the lustrous glory of your world-encompassing beauty, filling my eyes, filling my mind, filling my life. O Mother! let the light of that death-conquering black

¹ The five elements.

² Equanimity and self-restraint, external and internal.

³ Adrṣṭa vāda.

⁴ There is no escape for the driven, because he, too, is associated with the sufferings of the Jīva, though he does not feel them.

beauty of yours, which has the lustre of a million moons, dispel the darkness of my fear of death. O Mother! may I, climbing to your bosom and becoming yours, die the death¹ for which even immortals, regardless of their privilege of immortality, long. So I say, come, O Mother! let us two, Mother and son, together undertake today the journey by carriage. Let me for once see, O Mother! your Car-journey² in the carriage of my body, in the carriage of my eyes, in the carriage of my mind, in the carriage of my heart. I have heard that there is no return journey³ in your carriage, and hence this desire on my part."

¹ Of the individual self in the bosom of the Mother.

² Rathajātra, or car festival, in which the Deva or Devī is drawn in a car. Here the human body is the Devī's car.

CHAPTER IX

ŚIVA AND ŚAKTI

SĀDHAKA, no Śāstra or community denies that the above-mentioned Ātmā, who is Śakti, is Brahman. Differences of opinion exist among those whose knowledge consists of distinctions only, in respect of the three words Ātmā, Śakti and Caitanya.¹ The word Ātmā is masculine, the word Śakti is feminine, and the word Chaitanya is neuter. As there are differences of gender between the three as names, so there are also differences of kind between them as things—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are male, Śakti is female, and Caitanya or Brahman is neuter. As there is no scope for distinction of kind in attributeless Citśakti the Śāstra has designated Caitanya or Brahman as neuter. Again, owing to differences in the forms in which the Śakti of will, the Śakti of knowledge, and the Śakti of action appear,² the Śāstra calls the Deva male and the Devī female, in accordance with the male or female principle inherent in all fathers and mothers in the world, beginning at the root from the Father of the world and the Mother of the world. This is no mere imagination on the part of the authors of the Śāstra; it is but a statement of what is really true. Femininity and masculinity exist wherever there is a description of creation, preservation, and destruction caused by māyā through a union of the two persons. The neuter state, or the state beyond that of a male or a female exists when the aspect above māyā is described. To speak of neuter does not imply complete absence of the male or the female principle; it implies only an unmanifested or undeveloped state of those principles (Śakti). Even in the bodies of neuters we see in life that both the masculine and feminine marks are found to be present. In some cases the neuter's body is found to be more like that of a male, while in others it is found to be more like that of a female, the only distinction being that the male or the female principle is not fully developed.

From what the Śāstra says about the generation of neuters it appears that when neither the male nor the female principle can subdue the other,

¹ That is, spirit, power, and intelligence or consciousness respectively.

a neuter is created, in whom the two principles exist in a state of equilibrium. The Śāradātilaka¹ says: "An excess of menstrual blood causes the birth of a female, an excess of seed that of a male, and an evenness of the quantities of blood and semen that of a neuter. This is certain."

The Mātṛkābheda Tantra says: "An excess of the Śakti's (woman's) blood over the puruṣa's (man's) seed causes the birth of a female child; its opposite causes the birth of a male child, and if the blood and the semen be equal in quantity a neuter is born. This is certain." It has also been stated what proportions of blood and semen mean equality in quantity.

"At the time of procreation twenty-two² units of menstrual blood and fourteen units of seed are produced in the bodies of the woman and the man respectively. This is equality. If the blood be in excess (that is to say, if twenty-two units of blood mix with less than fourteen units of semen), a female is born; and if the semen be in excess (that is to say, if fourteen units of semen mix with less than twenty-two units of blood), a male is born; and if the above-mentioned numbers of units of blood and semen remain the same, a neuter is born."

Even in this equality of the numbers of units the excess³ of half a unit one way or the other leads to the appearance of female marks or male marks in the body of a neuter; and according to these marks neuters may be divided into male-neuters and female-neuters. But the Śāstra, which notices the result only, has rejected this useless classification and has ordinarily treated all neuters as the same. Nevertheless, although the difference between male neuters and female neuters makes no difference in the fruit, it makes some difference at the root and in the flower; otherwise, the difference would not have appeared. At the root there is the difference between the quantities of blood and semen, and in the flower there are differences, physical, mental, and functional. The neuter whose body resembles that of a male develops mostly masculine tendencies, and the neuter whose body resembles that of a female develops mostly feminine tendencies. Similarly, just as the male and female principles exist undeveloped in neuters, their developed forms being the male and female entities, so both the principles of Śakti and Śiva exist unmanifested in the Brahman, their manifestations being Umā and Maheśvara, Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Sitā and Rāma, and so on. Besides this, that blissful Brahman aspect of Śiva and Śakti, wherein They are manifest

¹ See also as to the process of sexual union, chap. ii, of the Mātṛkābheda Tantra, chap. i, Śāktānandatarangīṇī; Prāṇatoṣīṇī, p. 29.

² See Śāradātilaka.

³ The equality is supposed to hold so long as there is not the difference of

and yet unmanifest and are inseparate from each other, and which can be worshipped only as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness and bliss—that aspect is Mahāvidyā, primordial, beginningless, worshipped of Brahmā and other Devas and sought by the three worlds.

We shall possibly, while dealing with the subject of sādhana, be able to present to the scrutiny of Sādhakas a sketch of a part of that aspect wherein bliss has its full play and which is monistic and eternal and above māyā. Here we must understand that Caitanya¹ is nothing but Śakti, although the word itself is neuter in gender. To this end we shall quote a single sūtra from the Tantra Śāstra, in which the all-luminous aspect of Brahman is established. The Nirvāṇa Tantra ² says:

“In the Satyaloka ³, Mahākālī and Mahānidra live, embracing one another inseparably. That eternal Śakti, possessing the lustre of the moon, the sun, and fire, taken together and united with the eternal Puruṣa, exists like a grain of gram. (That is to say just as the two halves of a grain of gram are attached to one another, so they too are attached to one another.) As a grain of gram is covered by an external shell, so She is covered by Her own covering of māyā. As the shell of a grain of gram is dark and hard compared with its brilliant and soft valves, so māyā also, discordant with its three guṇas, is dark and hard compared with Śiva-Śakti, full of brilliance and soft with supreme bliss. As the whole, consisting of two halves and a shell, is called gram, so the whole consisting of Śiva-Śakti and māyā, is called Brahman. To an ordinary observer, making his observation from outside the shell, a grain of gram seems to contain only one thing, but he who can see through the shell finds within that grain two halves facing and inseparably attached to one another. Similarly, he who judges Brahma-tattva through māyā finds Brahman to be but one. To the eyes, however, of an adept in such knowledge,⁴ an accomplished Sādhaka, who is aware of the deceptive character of māyā, there are manifested both His aspects of Śiva and Śakti, all full of supreme love. As sparks shoot from a burning fire, so Jīvas, forming parts of Her body, shoot from the limbs of the luminous Devī into infinite millions of Brahmāṇḍas.”

The male and female forms, different from one another, are, whether they appear in the aspect of Īśvara or in that of Jīva, but instruments in the dualistic play. They are different only as instruments, but not as agents. The agent is the same for both the instruments, and that is Ātmā or Śakti. Again, as in the bodies of males and females, so in the bodies of neuters also, Ātmā or Śakti is the presiding Devatā. It therefore comes

¹ Consciousness.

² This is not to be confused with the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.

to this, that the bodies of males, females and neuters are alike seats of the play of Citsakti. There is no other alternative. It is an extremely erroneous conclusion that because words ending in the suffix "kti" are feminine, śakti must always refer to the female body and have no concern with the male body.

But, then, it may be asked, Why does the word śakti mean a female only? To this question we shall be bound so far as it will be in our power to give a suitable answer in its proper place. Here, we shall say this much alone, that the word śakti, meaning the female principle, is Yogārūḍha,¹ for, fundamentally, Śakti is the same as Prakṛti, and males and neuters are but changed forms of that Prakṛti. The assumption of the male form by Śakti for the purpose of creation is but an exhibition of play. At the close of the play of samsāra, Mahāśakti will withdraw this form and exist in that which is really Her own. This is the conclusion of those who believe in a perfect Mahā-pralaya.² But the arguments and authorities in favour of this view are very weak.

The Tantra Śāstra, therefore, holds that the puruṣa side³ is the cause of the bondage consisting of attachment to the samsāra, and that the śakti side is the cause of liberation⁴ or cessation of attachment to the samsāra. There is no ground for the occurrence of a perfect great Dissolution⁵ of the flow of worlds. For this reason, eternal are the creation, preservation, and destruction by Her who is eternally blissful. Eternal is Her bondage, and eternal also is Her liberation. In the eternal form of Her who is ever liberation itself, eternal also is Puruṣa as the seed of creation. But in the case of liberation in the form of perfect nirvāṇa, the Puruṣaśakti exists only to enjoy the play of bliss. Waves of creation no longer play in Her.⁶

¹ That is, a word which has an etymological as well as a special or conventional meaning, but is used only in the latter sense. Thus, *pankaja*, which etymologically applies to what is "mud-born," is used only in respect of a particular thing—*uiz.*, the lotus of which it is the synonym.

² A *pralaya* (dissolution of things) after which there is no creation.

³ Literally, "part" (of Śakti)—that is, the Śakti of creation. Puruṣa is not here used in the Sāṃkhya sense, but in that of the male side of creation. According to Hindu ideas it is the male who creates; the mother side is the support—*ādhāra* only.

⁴ In so far as Śakti represents the supreme motionless Brahman, and Puruṣa the Dakṣiṇa śakti its manifestation (see *Mahākāla Tantra, Post*).

⁵ *Mahāpralaya*. For karma is eternal, and after *pralaya* exists in the Brahman in a latent subdued form, which, on the reawakening, becomes the seed of new worlds.

⁶ That is, in liberation (*mukti*) that aspect of Śakti which is creative ceases to create, and there is then only *līlānanda-mukti*, the play of the supreme

For this reason, keeping that śakti ¹ beneath Her as a mere instrument of play, the Mahāśakti, who grants liberation, stands upon it and, lost in the enjoyment of the sweetness of Brahma-bliss, assumes the part of a mad woman, subduing the inactive Puruṣa, or creative śakti,² under Her feet. She of dishevelled hair proclaims the victory of liberation, and, extending Her uplifted hands, gives assurance to Her children, frightened by the dread of existence, with the cry, "Fear not! fear not!". That Puruṣa, the creative śakti, is Mahākāla, and on his breast that Dispeller of the fear of death, that Delighter of the heart, Charmer of the mind of Kāla holds Her Kaivalya-play. It, has, therefore, been said in the Mahākāla Tantra:

"Puruṣa is called right (Dakṣiṇa, because he is the right side of the body), and Śakti is called left (Vāmā, because she is the left side of the body). So long as the right and left, the male and female, remain equally powerful, so long alone does the bondage of saṃsāra endure. When, by dint of intense sādhana, the left śakti has been awakened, when the left has overpowered Puruṣa, the right Śakti, and lost Herself in gracious joy on His body (that is to say, when both the parts of right and left are filled with Her power), then She (who is bliss unalloyed) grants highest liberation ³ to Jīva. For this reason, the Mother, the saviour of the three worlds, is called Dakṣiṇā Kālī. Just as the body of a neuter, which represents the unmanifested state of both the male and female sides, is not produced without a union between a male and a female, so the Brahman aspect does not appear without the presence in it of Śiva and Śakti, the Father and Mother of the Brahmāṇḍa in an unmanifested state.

"As a neuter cannot give birth to children, so the Brahman aspect, which is above the three guṇas, is devoid of the creative, preservative, and destructive activities. Again, in its state with attributes there appear from it Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Sāvitṛī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, and other forms, according to distribution of guṇas, and as the male and female agents for the control of those guṇas. It is from the same aspect of Śakti that the creation, preservation, and destruction of untold millions of Brahmāṇḍas take place."

It therefore follows that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitṛī, Durgā, Rukmiṇī, and whomsoever else, male or female, you may mention, are all aspects of Śakti. Brahmā is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of creation, Viṣṇu is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of preservation, and Maheśvara is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of destruction. Sūrya is the aspect of Śakti in Her

¹ That is, Puruṣa.

² Though the creative agent, He has ceased to create.

"The neuter state of monistic existence, which is the result of the union of Śiva and Śakti, is revealed of Itself, without any separate worship thereof.¹ The attributeless aspect, which is the fruit of all sādhana, and in which, at the conclusion of all sādhana, the worshipper sinks and loses himself, cannot be attained while sādhana continues. It is attained by the great siddhi known as nirvāṇa."

Whatever form She may assume in Her aspect with attributes is but Her form. That Śakti alone who grants enjoyment, salvation, and devotion, is in all such forms. Now the Sādhaka may, if he so desires, know Her as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, and Rāma, or as Kālī, Tārā, Rādhā, Durgā, Sītā, and Lakṣmī, or please himself by calling Her mother, father, friend, and well-wisher. It does not matter whether the Vaiṣṇava considers Her as Viṣṇu in the form of Śakti, or the Śākta considers Her as Śakti in the form of Viṣṇu. When we sink in the ocean of Her substance, which is Cit-śakti,² forgetful of all differences of masculinity and femininity appertaining to forms, then Kṛṣṇaśakti, Śivaśakti, or Kālīśakti, and all other Śaktis, will be mingled into one by the waves of that ocean.

That Mahāśakti is everywhere the real giver of liberation, from whomsoever it may come, whether Śiva, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Gaṇeśa, or Sūrya. This condition of unity does not arise without a knowledge of śakti-tattva.³ Nirvāṇa liberation is impossible so long as all things do not combine into a state of unity. It is for this reason that the Tantra has said: "O Devī! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Śakti." Rama-prasada⁴ also, whose life was in the Tantra, has sung the same air: "You assume five principal forms, according to differences of worship. But, O Mother! how can you escape from the hands of him who has dissolved the five and made them into one?"

To our great misfortune, our doubts thicken round the very names of the Mother of the world on account of that very sādhana, with which devoted sādhakas sink into the sweetness of Her being⁵ and are blessed and liberated from the state of a Jīva. One of Her names, which are suspected to contain imprints of Māyāvāda,⁶ is Viṣṇumāyā. It is out of this name that Her title of "great Vaiṣṇavi" has been evolved. It has been said in the Yoginī Tantra⁷: "Remembering the time when,

¹ That is, the male and female forms are assumed by the Supreme for sādhana. When a sādhaka has attained siddhi in any of these forms, the neuter form reveals itself before him without any further effort on his part.

² See *post*.

³ The truth relating to Śakti.

⁴ Rama Prasada Sen, the great Bengali poet, Tāntrik, and worshipper of Kālī Mā; born 1718, died 1775.

after the destruction of the Asura, Ghora, in the waters of pralaya, Ādyā-śakti gave to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara the charge of creation, preservation, and destruction respectively, Mahādeva said : 'O Spouse of Śambhu ! that Mahākālī granted us the śakti of will, the śakti of knowledge, and the śakti of action for doing the work of creation, preservation, and destruction. She gave the śakti of will to Brahmā for creation, the śakti of action to Viṣṇu, and the śakti of knowledge, which is the embodiment of all śaktis, to me.' "

According to differences in the mutual relation of the guṇas of māyā which consists of three guṇas, the rajas guṇa gives rise to the śakti of will, the sattva guṇa gives rise to the śakti of action, and the tamaś guṇa gives rise to the śakti of knowledge. In Her play, wherein She appears as embodied beings, these three forms of śakti constitute the forms of Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Māheśvarī. In these three forms She is as much Brahmamāyā and Śivamāyā as She is Viṣṇumāyā ; but still, in most places, the Śāstra has spoken of Her as Viṣṇumāyā. The reason for this is that from the commencement of creation to time of pralaya, Jīvas, in this samsāra are subject to the preservative Śakti. The preservative Śakti rests in Viṣṇu, and the presiding Devī over the act of preservation is Vaiṣṇaviśakti or Viṣṇumāyā. The Devas have therefore said in this hymn to the Devī :

"O Devī ! thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti of infinite power, Thou art Parama (supreme) Māyā, which is the seed of the universe. All this world is deluded by Thee, and Thou, again, when pleased, grantest liberation to Jīvas." Although as Māyā She is Śivamāyā and Brahmamāyā also, the Devas said : "Thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti, Thou art Parama (supreme) Māyā," because preservation of the Universe is impossible without the influence of Vaiṣṇavi-Māyā. For this reason they again said : "Thou art the seed of the Universe," because "all this world is deluded by Thee"—that is to say, without delusion the Universe cannot exist. It is under the power of Viṣṇuśakti that Jīva is overcome by delusion,¹ and for this reason one of the names of Viṣṇu is Janārdana, or He who overcomes Jana.²

The world, whilst in the condition of preservation, has not so much concern with the Māyā of Brahmā, by which it was created in the past, or the Māyā of Maheśvara, by which it will be destroyed in the future, as with the Māyā of Viṣṇu, which has operation in the present time. At the time of creation Jīvas had no independence in the matter of coming into the world, for the Jīvahood of Jīvas was created by the force of the will of Him who also created the world by His will. Again, at the time of the great Dissolution,³ Jīvas will have no independence in the matter of leaving the samsāra for the Jīvahood of Jīvas is withdrawn by Him who

the aspect of Viṣṇu is but an aspect assumed by Her who is Māyā or Śakti.

Again, some communities, proud of their Vaiṣṇavism, are nowadays heard to say that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī. "To serve as if it were one's own self" (to serve God as one would serve oneself) is the conclusion (idea) of the Vaiṣṇava Śāstra. We have therefore nothing to say to the Vaiṣṇava who holds that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī, because this notion merely bespeaks his own nature. There is, moreover, this delightful inconsequence, that while the Mother is considered a Vaiṣṇavī the Father is a spiritual brother.¹ Blessed be thou, O Vaiṣṇava ! Bravo to thy conclusion ! Living in the society of men, you alone have realized the beauty of this relationship. If you have such a strong desire to call Mahādeva your spiritual brother in order to create a precedent (which they follow) for your own community, then why not treat every one equally, from the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara to the mother of the smallest insect ? Let the Śākta and the Vaiṣṇava unite their voices in singing : "Jīva is Śiva ! Śiva is Jīva !" Then, why Mahādeva alone ? All Devas, Adhidevas,² Upādevas,³ Dānavas,⁴ Mānavas,⁵ and all the creatures in the Brahmāṇḍa will appear to be nothing but the children of Jagaddhātṛi,⁶ who brings forth endless millions of worlds.⁷

There will then exist no other relationship but that of the spirit, so that the three worlds will then be full of spiritual brothers only. Can you tell me, O Vaiṣṇava ! when, by the blessings of Vaiṣṇavas and the grace of Viṣṇu, the day will come on which you will realize Śakti, not as Viṣṇumāyā, but as Viṣṇu ? Śakti is called Vaiṣṇavī, not because She is possessed by Viṣṇu, but because She is progenitrix of Viṣṇu. Gangā⁸ is called Bhāgīrathī because She was worshipped and brought down by Bhagīratha. The reason for Her being called after the name of Bhagīratha is not that She, whom even Brahmā and other Devas are rarely able to worship, is under the protection of Bhagīratha, but that, urged by the tender desire "to be called the mother of Bhagīratha," and in order to immortalize in the three worlds the immense glory of Bhagīratha, that crest-gem of devotees, the Mother of the universe, dweller on the head of Śaṅkara, and dispeller of the sorrows of saṃsāra, has proclaimed to the three worlds, out of love for Her devotees, the greatness of devotion shown to Her, by the adoption of the name of Bhāgīrathī.

¹ That is, Śiva the Father must be a Vaiṣṇava if the Devī be Vaiṣṇavī ; and as Vaiṣṇava he is a spiritual brother—that is, one of the same sect.

² Ruling Devas.

³ Subordinate Devas.

⁵ Men.

⁴ Demonic spirits.

⁶ Devī as supporter of the universe

Similarly, in spite of Her being the progenitrix of Brahmā and other Devas, and Mother of the universe, She has proclaimed Her śaktis of creation, preservation, and destruction by adopting the names of Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī. She was born as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara and was, again, Herself their Mother. If you call Her dependent, She is dependent on Herself alone. If you call Her patroness, She patronizes none but Herself. There is, therefore, no possibility of Her being injured by anything which may be said about Her. What, however, we can do is to march along the path to hell. So I say, O Sādhaka, beware! save yourself from all these sinful notions.

Another of the names of the Mother is Brahmamayī. This, too, gives to the detractors an opportunity to object that She who is Brahman can never be Brahmamayī. If She is Brahmāṇī why, then, is She called Brahmamayī? She might very well be called Brahman. In reply to this objection we shall not, after recitation of the whole of Rāmāyaṇa, proceed to give an account of Sītā.¹ It is no wonder that man, whose nature it is to err, will be deluded by Her māyā, which sometimes deludes even Brahmā and other Devas ardently devoted to Her. Sādhakas who are inquirers after spiritual knowledge² should, however, know that just as beads are made of gold,³ images are made of earth,⁴ Gangā⁵ is made of water,⁶ and the sun is made of light and heat,⁷ so the substance of the Mother of the world is Brahman.⁸ The word Brahmamayī has been formed by adding the suffix mayat to the word Brahman in the sense of "Own form"⁹.

What is Her "own form" that is Brahman; or what is Brahman's "own form" that is She. Even while embodied, Brahman She is, in reality, above all guṇas, and so She is called Brahmamayī. Her hands, feet, and other limbs, her raiments, ornaments, and conveyances, the members of Her family, etc., are all Brahman's "own form," and so She is Brahmamayī. The meaning of the term Brahmamayī is not "One who pervades Brahman,"¹⁰ but "One who is Brahman"¹¹. Brahman pervades the universe, but the Ārya Śāstra makes no mention of anything which can pervade Brahman.

From all that we have so far said on the subject of śakti-tattva, Sādhakas have surely come to understand that the śakti to whom ill-disposed Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas refer is not the same Śakti as forms the subject of the Tantra Śāstra.

¹ That is to say, to repeat which is a useless task.

² *Lit.*: "inquirers of tattva."

⁵ The River Ganges.

⁸ Brahmamayī.

³ Svarṇamayī.

⁶ Jalamayī.

⁹ Svarūpa.

⁴ Mṛṇmayī.

⁷ Tejomayī.

Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, Rukmiṇī, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, Gangā, Gaurī, Gaṇeśa,¹ Sūrya, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Deva, Dānava,² Gandharva, Kinnara, Yakṣa,³ Rakṣa,⁴ man, beast, bird, insect, and the endless universe which is full of all such moving and motionless things is Śakti in substance. Again, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, Satī, and other manifestations of Brahman, are but the Kaivalya play⁵ of Mahāśakti. In the quotation which we have already made in connection with the destruction of thousand-headed Rāvaṇa, Sādhakas have obtained a notion of Sītātattva.⁶

Here we shall make a few quotations to illustrate the manner in which the Śāstra supports⁷ the contention of the Vaiṣṇavas that Rādhikā is "Śrīkṛṣṇa's handmaid," and their practice of worshipping Rādhikā with articles of food first offered to Śrīkṛṣṇa. From this play of the waves of śāstrik authority, Sādhakas will form a conception of the vast expanse and grave solemnity of the sea of the nectar of Rādhātattva.⁸

In the Devī Bhāgavata⁹ Śrī Nārāyaṇa says to Nārada: "In the region of Goloka¹⁰ Rādhikā was first of all worshipped by Kṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, within the Rāsamaṇḍala¹¹ on the full-moon day in the month of Kārtik. Next, under the command of Bhagavān, She was worshipped by the company of herdswomen and cowherds, their boys and girls, the cows, and Surabhi, the queen of the race of cows. Since Her worship by the inhabitants of Goloka, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas, and the Munis inhabiting the city of immortals ever worship and adore Her with devotion, with flowers and incense. On earth She was first worshipped by Suyajña in the sacred field of Bhāratavarṣa, under the direction of Bhagavān Mahādeva. Subsequently, under the command of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, the inhabitants of the three worlds began to worship Her."

¹ Rādhā, beloved of Kṛṣṇa; the Devī Lakṣmī; wife of Rāma; wife of Kṛṣṇa; wife of Brahmā; the Devī Sarasvatī; the River Ganges (considered as Devī); the elephant-headed Devā, son of Śiva.

² The sun; Śiva; Viṣṇu; Lord of the Devas; the moon as a Deva; the Lord of air; the Lord of waters; Deva; and demonic spirit.

³ Devayonis of those names (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Demonic beings.

⁵ That is, the play of unity in diversity. Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, and Satī are Mahāśakti, and so one with Her.

⁶ The subject of Sītā, wife of Rāma.

⁷ That is, does not support.

⁸ The subject of Rādhā.

⁹ Chap. ix.

¹⁰ Kṛṣṇa's heaven (see Viṣṇu Purāṇa, I. iii).

In the second Rātra¹ of the Nāradapañcarātra it is said: "Just as Śrīkṛṣṇa, who is Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment,² so Rādhikā, who is also Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment. Just as, for the sake of work to be done, He at times assumes forms with attributes, so Mahāprakṛti Rādhikā also, for the same purpose, at times assumes the form of gross Prakṛti. In gross form that subtle Prakṛti lives, by the force of yoga, in the life,³ the tongue, the intellect, and the mind of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Parameśvara. Nārada! at times She seems to appear in, and disappear from, the world formed of māyā; but in reality She neither takes birth, nor is dependent on the action of any other being or person. Like Bhagavān Hari, Bhagavatī Rādhikā also is eternal and truth in substance. O Muni! the Mahāśakti who presides over the life of Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa appears as Rādhā, and She who presides over His tongue is Sarasvatī Herself. She who presides over His intellect is Durgā, the destroyer of evil, who has now incarnated Herself as the daughter of Himālaya, the Mountain-king, the destroyer of the enemies of the Devas, who, by appearing in the form of the mass of energy⁴ of all the Devas, crushed the race of Daityas,⁵ and gave back to the Devas the sovereignty of the kingdom of heaven; She it is who holds the three worlds, who appears as hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, contentment, nourishment, forgiveness, shame, and error, who rules over all Jīvas, and who, in particular, presides as Sāvitrī over the hearts of Brāhmaṇas. It was from the left side of Rādhikā that Mahālakṣmī appeared, She who is the presiding Devatā over the wealth,⁶ of Īśvara. From a part of that Mahālakṣmī appeared the sea-born⁷ Kamalā, who arose from out of the sea of milk what time it was churned. It is She who is the earthly Lakṣmī on earth, and the spouse of Nārāyaṇa who lies upon the sea of milk. The heavenly Lakṣmī also, who presides over the dwellings of Indra and other Devas, appeared from a part of Devī Mahālakṣmī who Herself is the spouse of the Lord of Vaiṣṇava. Sāvitrī, who dwells in the Brahmāloka, is the wife of Brahmā. At the command of Bhagavān, Sarasvatī had already divided Herself into two parts. The first part remained as Sarasvatī and the second became Bhārati.⁸ Both were accomplished yoginīs by dint of yoga. Of them, Bhārati is the wife of Brahmā, and Sarasvatī is the spouse of Viṣṇu. Parameśvarī Rādhikā, the mistress of the play of Rāsa,⁹ is the presiding Devatā, over the Rāsa-circle, and

¹ Chap. ii.

² Nirlipta.

³ Prāṇa, the vital principle.

⁴ Tejas.

⁵ Titans.

⁶ Aīśvaryya, that which constitutes Īśvara-hood (see *post*).

⁷ Sindhubālā, who came out of the sea.

that eternal Brahmasanātani incarnated Herself in full in the region of Bṛndāvana.¹ Within the Rāsa-circle She was the principal actress of the play of Rāsa, making use of the occasion of the love-play to show Her love to devotees. Bhagavatī ate betel chewed by Bhagavān, and Bhagavān ate betel chewed by Bhagavatī (in order to show their love for devotees, or to show that both of them were, in fact, the same). In reality both of them have the same body. (In outward vision they appear to possess different bodies, to enhance the sweetness of their play, but in reality no such difference exists.) The difference between them is like the difference between milk and its whiteness, that is to say, just as the substance milk is an aggregate of such constituent qualities as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so the substance Brahman is an aggregate of existence, consciousness, bliss, and the like. Just as the state of milk cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so Brahmanhood cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as śakti, possessor of śakti, śakti vibhūti,² and the like. Just as substantially no difference exists between the constituent parts of a thing, although, according to the method of linguistic exposition, differences are imagined to exist between them, and different names are assigned to them, so actually no difference exists between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, although they are different in the aspects they assume in play. Brahman is both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She who is Rādhikā is also Kṛṣṇa, and He who is Kṛṣṇa is also Rādhikā. Those who distinguish between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who constitute one non-differentiable, non-dualistic supreme Being,³ will not escape the torments of hell so long as the sun and moon will endure. The heinous bodies of those who make a distinction between them, and, failing to understand the play of Brahman, speak ill of Rādhikā, the supreme Prakṛti, will be boiled in the Kumbhīpāka hell so long as Brahmā lives.”

Again, in the sixth Chapter it is said: “First utter the name of Rādhā and next that of Kṛṣṇa or Mādhava.⁴ Whoever reads in the opposite way surely commits a sin equal to that of murdering a Brāhmaṇa. Rādhikā is the Mother and Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Father of the universe.⁵ Although both are the same in substance, yet in the incarnation They take in play, and, according to human⁶ custom, the Mother is the object of a hundred times greater glory, adoration, and worship⁷ than the father.”

¹ The town Bṛndāvana, in the united Provinces.

² Manifestation of Śakti (see *post*).

³ Tattva.

⁴ Mādhava is one of the names of Kṛṣṇa as destroyer of the demon Madhu.

⁵ The mother's name is always placed first.

⁶ Laukika.

⁷ See *post*. The child should regard its mother and father as two visible

“It is in order to maintain this glory that Śāstra has enjoined men to take the name of Rādhikā first and that of Śrīkrṣṇa next. It is natural to expect that because the mother is the wife of the father her position will be less glorious than his, according to men’s notions; but here custom is inspired by dharma,¹ and is, consequently, approved by the Śāstra. Not only the custom of men, but even the Śāstra itself says: ‘In glory the mother surpasses the father a thousand times.’ The reason, also, for this has been stated in the Śāstra. It says that: ‘The mother is an object of greater glory than the father because she holds the child in her womb and nourishes it.’ He is the Guru of the world by whom the world is educated and initiated. Prakṛti tests this education and initiation of the world—that is to say, the Guru can teach only what the Jīvas² (nature) can accept. Prakṛti, therefore, has the charge of testing the passion or dispassion for education.

“This Prakṛti, the examiner of the world, however, has also to receive education and initiation from mother Mahāprakṛti.³ For ten months and ten days before its appearance in the world of men the child’s Prakṛti is initiated in the mantra which is contained in the mother’s body, food, senses, and mind, and educated therein. It has already been shown that in the proportion of seed and blood the quantity of blood, which is the mother’s portion, is the greater. For this reason the mother’s contribution to the Jīva’s body is larger than the father’s. At the very outset this gives to the mother superiority over the father. Next comes the pregnancy for ten months and ten days. During this period the record of the Jīva’s destiny lies engraved on the foundations of the mother’s body. The child’s body is built and developed according to her thoughts, her doings, and the humours⁴ and blood flowing in her body.

“After this, again, for five years the child drinks the mother’s milk. Taking all these matters together, it appears that the child’s indebtedness to the mother permeates his veins, arteries, bones, marrow, vital airs, body, senses, mind, and, indeed, every molecule and atom from the tip of his toe to the top of his head. His indebtedness to his father is only in respect of the act of procreation. This is the law of nature. The child’s indebtedness to his father for acts done subsequent to procreation, such as performances of the ten samskāras,⁵ education, maintenance, and so forth, is not such as must naturally appertain to the father, for in his absence these acts may be done by any other guardian. For this reason it does not matter very much to the child if the father dies after

¹ A religious spirit.

² Prakṛti.

³ The greater Prakṛti.

procreation; but if the mother dies after conception, not even the united power of the three worlds can supply her place.

“Under the weight of this great and solemn glory the Śāstras ordaining household duties have, with heads bowed down, said: ‘The mother is a thousand times more glorious and more worshipful than the father.’ Such being the decision of even such Śāstras as deal principally with domestic duties, it need hardly be said that in the spiritual¹ vision of the Tantra Śāstra, which deals principally with sādhana dharma,² there is in this no difference between the worldly mother and the spiritual Mother (or Śakti). In the chapter on Śaktilīlā³ we shall try, as far as it will be in our power, to show how the principle⁴ (of the superiority) of human motherhood is applicable to Rādhā, the embodiment of the unattached⁴ Brahman, and what the Tantra Śāstra says on the subject. Here we desist, for to do so would be to digress. For the present, the very notion under which Sādhakas know Her as Mother will enable them to understand this much, that the name of Rādhā should be taken first and then that of Kṛṣṇa, and that a reversal of this order is faulty worship in their sādhana for truth.¹

“Those who speak ill of Rādhikā either through perversity of intellect caused by unavoidable fate, or through blindness due to ill-feeling towards Vāmācāra,⁵ or through ignorance or sin, do not know that Rādhikā is an aspect of Hari’s own self, and that an enemy of Rādhā is also an enemy of Hari. In the next world the place of such a man will be in a cauldron of boiling oil in the midst of the Kumbhīpāka hell for the life-time of a hundred Brahmās, and in this world the extinction of his progeny and his own total ruin is inevitable.”

“(So long as that detractor of śakti shall not die), he will fall (from his own dharma⁶ through unrighteousness),⁷ and be deprived of the power to arise on account of malice against Śākti; he will be prostrate on earth and suffer from endless disease and perils at every step. In the Brahmakṣetra,⁸ the Puṣkara tīrtha, this (truth) about Rādhā was told by Hari to Brahmā, and subsequently I heard it from Brahmā. Sādhus (who are themselves pure and purify others) constantly worship the lotus-feet of Rādhā, who purifies the three worlds. Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa Himself ever offers arghya⁹ with devotion at those worshipful lotus-feet. Besides

¹ Tattva

² Rules as to ritual practice, worship, etc.

³ The play of Śakti.

⁴ Nirlipta. The supreme inactive Brahman, unaffected by, and unattached to, the Brahmāṇḍa (universe).

⁵ Vāmācāra is one of the Tāntrik Ācāras (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ Svadharma.

⁷ Adharma.

⁸ At Puṣkara, in Ajmer, where there is a temple to Brahmā.

⁹ An offering of grains of paddy and blades of dūrvā grass to a person.

this, (during the play he enjoyed) in the woods and groves of Bṛndāvana, Bhagavān (possessed of a form sweet with love) painted with devotion (by soft touches of his own finger) the tips of the toes of the lotus-feet of Her (who was all full of love and Brahman incarnate) with the cool and brilliant paint of alakta.”¹

In the Rādhā Tantra it has been said: “In the great mantra consisting of Rādhikā’s thousand names, Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Ṛṣi, the great Devī who crushed Mahiṣa is the presiding Devatā and Gāyatrī is the metre. The application of this mantra is for siddhi in Mahāvidyā.”²

The Ṛṣi of a mantra is he who was the first to be initiated and attain siddhi in it.³ There is nothing to say to those who are worshippers of the yugala form⁴ and with a knowledge of monistic truth do not discriminate between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But even from the dualistic standpoint sādhakas should now understand how Rādhikā stands in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.⁵

Again, in the Nārada Pañc arātra it has been said: “Of the great mantra consisting of one thousand names of Rādhikā, by whose grace Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Sovereign Master⁷ of the region of Goloka, and has attained the position of supreme Lord of the great mantra, Nārada is the Ṛṣi, and (owing to its being a different mantra)⁸ Rādhikā, who is supreme over the supreme, is the Devatā. Its application is for the fulfilment of the fourfold aim.”⁹

Rādhikā is the handmaid, initiation in whose mantra, and education and accomplishment in whose Tantra, made Bhagavān to become Bhagavān. To worship Her, even the Lord of the universe descended on earth from Goloka and became Her servant. In the hope of kissing Her graceful feet the head of Cintāmaṇi¹⁰—the thought of whose feet gratifies the world of moving and unmoving things, who is the crest-gem of the four-headed Deva¹¹—touched the dust. If, then, you call Her who is such an one Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid, then whom would you call Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Īśvarī?¹² I would not of my own accord, say all this. I am obliged to do

¹ Red lac paint, with which the soles of the feet of Hindu women are painted.

² The successful attainment of knowledge of Devī Mahāvidyā.

³ And who reveals it.

⁴ The form in which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are combined.

⁵ That is, even if they make a distinction between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, sādhakas should understand from the above the relation of the one to the other.

⁶ Chap. v, 5th Rātra.

⁷ Adhīśvara.

⁸ From the preceding.

⁹ Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹⁰ One of the names of Kṛṣṇa.

¹¹ Brahmā.

so in reply to your words. It is for this reason that there is so much discussion about honour and dishonour. My Kṛṣṇa has neither a handmaid nor an Īśvarī; but when your Kṛṣṇa has necessity for a handmaid, why should he not have necessity for an Īśvarī as well? The moment you step within the bounds of dualistic knowledge He, in spite of His being Īśvara, will have, by your grace, to suffer inevitably as well the state of a servant as that of a master. Or, if in your language, the person served is called handmaid and the person serving is called master, then we have nothing to object to this servitude and lordship. However that may be, O you whose knowledge is of a dualistic kind, take note that it is the nineteenth century of the Kali yuga, and apparently the custom of the age is to call mothers and aunts handmaids!

However that be, it requires now to be seen what we gain or lose, whether or not there exists a relation of master and servant between Bhagavān and Bhagavatī. If it exists, a worshipper has no right to discuss it, nor is there the necessity to do so. If Rādhikā is to be worshipped merely on the ground of Her being Bhagavān's handmaid, and if, in that worship, Her satisfaction is to be sought, then surely it is necessary to ascertain and arrive at a final conclusion as to whether She is really Śrī Kṛṣṇa's handmaid or not. But, then, who will judge the matter? If you say that we shall be the judges, and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa themselves will supply the evidence, then, too, it will be extremely difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. For in the play of love which they enjoyed during their stay at Vraja, when Rādhikā said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "You are my all," Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Rādhikā, "I am unable to call You 'You'. To call You 'my own' is not much."¹ Putting aside even what Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, which is more² than what Rādhikā said, if the two are considered to be of equal positions, then, also, one of them cannot be a servant or handmaid of the other. Now, how can the matter be judged on the evidence of such witnesses? If, therefore, you want to judge the matter by a consideration of acts instead of words, then it is not for you and me to judge and arrive at a final conclusion on the matter. In this effort to appease the anger³ of Rādhikā, Bhagavān Himself finally decided the question at the feet of Rādhikā.

But if you say that you will call Rādhikā Śrī Kṛṣṇa's handmaid, and worship Her with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reliance only on the sentiment expressed by the words, "You are my all," spoken by Rādhikā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a temporary moment of service—a ripple, as it were, in

¹ The meaning of this is: "You and I are the same," so that the relationship of the speakers is not fully expressed by the expression "You are my all".

² For Kṛṣṇa did not discriminate between Him and Her.

the midst of waves of play in the sea of love—then even Rādhikā cannot be called inferior to Kṛṣṇa. If you can worship Rādhikā with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then I, too, can, in reliance upon the incident in which he appeases Rādhikā's anger, represent him as hankering after the leavings of Rādhikā's food and driven off with weeping. The service I speak of is as much one of sentiment as the one you speak of. As your words are sweet, but your acts are deceitful, so I am obliged to make my acts and words similar. In this state of things it is impossible for us even to come together, much less to arrive at any decision.

In sorrow have poets said: "If two persons be both candid, then the love that grows between them remains for ever candid and unshaken. If one of them be candid and another crooked, then love between them endures for a few days only—that is to say, so long as the crookedness of the crooked person does not show itself. And if both of them be crooked, there can be no love between them, much less a permanent love." O you who speak of distinctions, this crookedness of yours and mine precludes the possibility that love may grow between us. Think but once that They who are referred to in this discussion on the subject of love are both very crooked,¹ with three bends in their bodies,² and yet unite to form one person.³ The devotee has therefore said: "The moon will perish, the sun will perish, the Brahmāṇḍa formed by the spread of the three guṇas will perish, in the great dissolution, but it is the firm conviction of the Harivamśa⁴ community that the constant play of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at Bṛndāvana will never come to an end."

So, I say, O Sādhaka, see the threefold play of creation, preservation, and destruction in the thrice-bent and fair bodies of the Father and the Mother of the universe, and forget all distinctions. Call, for once, the Father Mother and the Mother Father, and making the Father and the Mother one, take them to the Sahasrāra.⁵ There, in the heart of that full-bloomed and thousand-petalled lotus, shining with the refulgence of the sun and moon, in that seat of the undifferentiated⁶ kaivalya-play⁷ of Him who is full of light and Her who is full of light, stand with folded hands, and with a disconsolate heart weep, and say: "I know not who you are? Be you Father or Mother or another, tell me whose I am?"

¹ Kutila.

² Trībhanga: a favourite representation of the body with Indian artists is that with three curves, formed by the inclined neck, trunk, and legs.

³ Bhagavān and Bhāgavatī are here called kutila and trībhanga because of the inscrutability of Their ways.

⁴ Vaiṣṇava. Harivamśa, or "family of Hari," is the name of a Paurāṇik work which gives the history of the family of Hari or Kṛṣṇa.

⁵ The thousand-petalled lotus in the head, above the six cakras (see *Introduction to Tantra Sāstra*).

“O you discriminating Vaiṣṇava! How dare you extend your authority over Viṣṇu, after whose name you are called a Vaiṣṇava, and who is your authority in everything? Being the servant of Viṣṇu’s servant’s servant, what makes you so proud that you insult the Devatā whom Viṣṇu adores? You would not admit the superiority of any over the Devatā you worship. Very well. But ought you, on that account, to divide one thing into two parts, and attribute lordship to one and servitude to another? Why should you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid instead of Kṛṣṇa’s own self? ¹ And even should you do so in the spirit of play, why do you not also call Kṛṣṇa Rādhā’s servant, just as you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa’s handmaid? Or do you think that Kṛṣṇa’s lordship cannot be maintained without calling Rādhā His handmaid? Is this your idea of Kṛṣṇa’s Brahmahood? He who is the Lord will always be so, whether Rādhā becomes His handmaid or not. O brother, you proceed to establish Kṛṣṇa’s lordship on Rādhā’s servitude; you proceed to worship the adored Devatā of Kṛṣṇa with food first offered to Him. But you do not even once desire to understand why you are in such a miserable plight in spite of your worship of Kṛṣṇa? Why are you not saved in spite of the presence of the Lord, the Saviour of the three worlds? To strike with a weapon the left limb of Him whose right limb you worship! Ah, we know not whether, in consequence of such worship, Bhagavān will gratify you by appearing before you, or greet you with His Sudarśana.² Friend of the poor! Merciful Deva! Thou alone art the Saviour of the three worlds, Thou art ever the reliever of burdens of the earth.

“Lord, save the community of Sādhakas from these false beliefs. Or, O Lord, it is miserliness shown by your self of your own accord. It is because Thou, O Kṛṣṇa, art unwilling to make the being ³ of Rādhā in which Thou hast sunk and lost Thyself the property of all, that Thou, O crest-gem of schemers,⁴ hast turned the wheel of the intelligence of Jivas. So I say, O discriminating Vaiṣṇava, if your understanding of the subject is of a dualistic character, then understand this also, that it is doubtful whether even after a hundred crores ⁵ of births, you will be able to worship Her whose worshipper Kṛṣṇa Himself is.”

Amongst those who, by throwing all these thorns upon the spiritual path, consider themselves to be learned,⁶ there are some who are even heard to say that śakti can exist only by the support ⁷ of the possessor of śakti, and therefore ask what is the necessity of worshipping the thing supported instead of the supporter?

Sādhakas have already been given ample evidence to show the nature of this relation of the supporter and the supported, between the possessor

of śakti and Śakti. What new answer can we now give to the above question? If, however, the matter must be judged from the point of view of the supporter and the supported, then, leaving aside considerations of śakti-tattva, we see that Brahmā is supported by a swan,¹ Viṣṇu is supported by Garuḍa, Mahādeva is supported by a bull, and the Devī is supported by a lion. Should we, then, for this reason ignore Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and Maheśvarī, and worship the swan, Garuḍa, the bull, and the lion, in the belief that as supporters they are the more important of the two? The relation between the possessor of śakti and Śakti is the same as that which exists between the carrier² and the person carried. This is the only fit reply to a fit question.

In reality, there are no such two things as Śakti and possessor of śakti. There is no evidence of, nor is there any necessity for, the existence of the two things. Male, female, and neuter, all are Śakti. Body, senses, mind, and Ātmā, all are manifestations³ of śakti. Citśakti⁴ as Ātma is, like the solar orb, the condensed and massive form of śakti; while body, senses, mind, and other things are, like sun's rays spreading on all sides, but fluid parts of that great massive śakti. Although the sun is in reality energy⁵ in substance, yet for common understanding such expressions as "the sun is possessed of energy" and "the sun's energy" are used. Similarly, although Ātmā is Śakti itself in substance, yet in order that Jīva may the better understand, Śāstra has used such expressions as "Ātmā is possessed of śakti" and "Ātmā's śakti". This is the only difference between Śakti and the possessor of śakti. In a spiritual sense, nothing exists as possessor of śakti besides Śakti.

Even the Puruṣa-form,⁶ which you and I, according to our language and understanding, know as the possessor of śakti, is but another or changed⁷ form of Prakṛti. Other evidence is unnecessary. Parameśvara himself, the sole and best Puruṣa in the world,⁸ who presides or dwells in all Puruṣas, has said in the Nirvāṇa Tantra:

"Just as trees grow on the earth and again disappear in it; just as bubbles are formed in water and again disappear in water; just as lightning is formed in clouds and again disappears in them; so at the time of creation Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas are born of the body of that beginningless and eternal Kālīkā, and at the time of dissolution they again disappear in Her. O Devī, for this reason, so long as Jīva does not know the supreme truth⁹ in regard to Her who plays with Mahākālā,¹⁰ his desire for liberation can only give rise to ridicule. From a part only of Kālīkā,

¹ Hamsa, or some say goose, duck, or flamingo.

³ Vibhūti.

⁶ Mūrti.

⁴ See *ante*.

² Vāhana.

⁵ Tejas.

⁷ Vikṛti.

That which is white, spotless, pure, attributeless and non-dualistic, that which is only a matter for realization by the Ātmā, that is the highest state of Mahādevī."

The Devī's words in the same Purāṇa are: "The supreme aspect of Mine the substance of which is consciousness,¹ sole,² and pure; the immortal state which is free from all upādhis,³ and eternal, that is only attainable by knowledge alone. Those who see the Ātmā as knowledge,⁴ undoubtedly enter into Me."

In the Devī Āgama it is said: "That Mahāmāyā, who in reality is consciousness and Parabrahman, has assumed various forms out of favour to devotees."

The Yoginī Tantra says: "He who exists pervading the viśva (universe) as Deva Viśveśvara is Himself Viśveśvarī, the universe-pervading Devī."

"Whatever śakti anything possesses, that is Devī Viśveśvarī, and all those things are Deva Viśveśvara. She into the hollows of whose every hair millions of Brahmāṇḍas constantly disappear; She it is who grants the desires of Sādhakas by the assumption of various forms in play (for such is Her kindness)."

In the Navaratneśvara it is said: "That Devī who is absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss, should be thought of as a female, or as a male, or as pure Brahman. In reality, however, She is neither male nor female, nor neuter—that is to say, she is not bound to any particular form).

"Still, just as a kalpalatā⁵ is called by a feminine name, so She, too, is called by a feminine name [Śakti—that is to say, one obtains from a kalpalatā anything which he desires, be it the fruit of a creeper (latā) or that of a tree, and this reveals a divine⁶ śakti beyond that of a latā (creeper) or of a tree]. Still, just as a kalpalatā is a latā (creeper) in form, so She assumes a female form,⁷ in spite of Her being all forms and above all forms." Just as the form of a latā (creeper) is the real form of a kalpalatā, in spite of its bearing fruits of trees, so the form of Śakti is Her real form in spite of all male appearances,⁸ such as Devas, Dānavas, and so on, which are Her forms⁹ only. Whether in dualistic or in non-dualistic play, in the form of Brahman or in the form of Jīva, the female is śakti, and the male is śākta. Śakti is the person worshipped, and Puruṣa is the person worshipping. This is the last step of sādhanā, the highest state of spiritual realization.¹⁰

¹ Cinmaya.

³ Apparent limitations, *vide ante*.

⁵ Desire, cf. IGV.

² Kevala.

⁴ Jñāna.

Although male and female are both Her aspects, yet Her śakti is naturally revealed more in the female than in the male form, and this is the cause of the distinction of worshipper and the worshipped,¹ and it is on account of this greater manifestation that females are called "śakti". From this one must not suppose that śakti is less present in such appearances² as Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, and so on. For although these appearances are actually male, they are not bound to the male form. They are merely formed in the play of Her who is consciousness in manifesting consciousness. If a Sādhaka who is a worshipper of the form of Kṛṣṇa desires to see Him as Kālī, then Bhagavān, the fulfiller of the desires of devotees, is bound to appear before him in that form.

Rādhikā Herself has, by pretending³ to be afraid of Āyāna,⁴ given evidence of this perfect Śakti of Bhagavān.⁵ It is with reference to this force of perfect Śakti in the female form that Maheśvarī Herself has said, in the Durgāgītā of the Muṇḍamālā Tantra:

"It is I who am Rādhikā in Goloka, Kamalā in Vaikuṇṭha, and Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī, the presiding Devī of speech in Brahmāloka. It is I who am Pārvatī in Kailāsa, Jānakī in Mithilā, Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā, and Draupadī⁶ in Hastināpura. I am Sandhyā⁷ and Gāyatrī, the Mother of Vedas, the objects of adoration to all the twice-born people. Among Yogas⁸ I am Puṣā, among flowers I am black Aparājītā,⁹ among leaves I am the bael-leaf,¹⁰ among pīthas I am the Yonipītha,¹¹ I am Mahāvidyā formed of Hari and Hara,¹² and I am also the worshipped of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. O Lord, O Śaṅkara,¹³ it is only by my special favour that Jīvas can know me (what more need I say, O my husband!); wherever there is Śakti (a female) there I am. O Mahādeva, know for certain that this is the manner in which I am best contemplated. Whoever forsakes this path of Śakti and proceeds along another path in search of Me throws away the jewel which is in the palm of his hand, and runs after a heap of ashes."

¹ The female principle is called śakti because there is more śakti revealed in it than in the male principle. As the Muṇḍamālā Tantra says, "Wherever there is a female (śakti), there I am." For the same reason the female is worshipped by the male.

² Mūrti.

³ Abhinaya.

⁴ Rādhikā's husband.

⁵ This point here is not at all clear. For the story is that Kṛṣṇa took the form of Kālī for fear of Āyāna.

⁶ As to these names, *vide ante*.

⁷ Morning, noon, and evening prayers personified (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁸ See *post*.

⁹ The flower clitoria.

¹⁰ Sacred to Śiva.

¹¹ Kamrūp in Assam (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

This is the command of Śāstra. If, after this, any of you wish to solve the matter by a thorough understanding in the light of science or philosophy, in that case also it must be admitted that there is no Śakti or possessor of Śakti other than the Śakti of Ātmā, by which body, senses, mind, and life¹ are guided. If everything is performed by Śakti, then why wait for a possessor of Śakti? If you ask by whose support² this Śakti exists, then do you yourself tell me by whose support the possessor of Śakti exists. If the Brahmaśakti who supports the Brahmāṇḍa has to wait for another's support, then this Brahmāṇḍa must go to perdition.³ Who is the container⁴ of the contained Śakti? By whose energy⁵ does fire burn? By whose speed does wind blow? Such questions do not bespeak a natural state of the mind. However that may be, it is because Puruṣa is enabled by the support of Śakti to display Himself⁶ that Śāstra has designated him as Śaktimān (the possessor of Śakti). The Brahmāṇḍa play of Brahmanamayī manifests the same principles. For this reason, in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the dualistic material world,⁷ the Puruṣa aspects of Śakti are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and Her Prakṛti aspects are Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī. In the Gāyatrī mantra also it is these two Puruṣas and Prakṛti aspects which have to be worshipped at the commencement in prāṇāyāma.⁸ Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are the Puruṣas, and at the end, in the Gāyatrī dhyāna,⁹ Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī are the Prakṛtis. The Gāyatrī is merely a Sūtra (aphorism), and the Sandhyā-prayers are its vṛtti (exposition) or Bhāṣya (commentary). In the Gāyatrī mantra five forms of Brahman's self¹⁰ have been specified—namely, pervader of the universe,¹¹ creator of the world,¹² object of worship,¹³ playful Deva,¹⁴ and instigator of Jīva's intelligence.¹⁵ Of these five, the epithet "pervader of the universe" denotes the Self-aspect,¹⁶ and comes first. Next follows the introduction of the dualistic world. The world cannot be created in the attributeless state, and without fully bringing into play the three guṇas. By whom will He be worshipped if no worshipper exists? Play¹⁷ is impossible if no desire

¹ Prāṇa.² Āśraya.³ Rasātala.⁴ Ādhāra.⁵ Tejas.⁶ Lit.: to spread his own vibhūti (see *post*).⁷ Prapañca.⁸ Breath-control (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).⁹ The formula of meditation on the Gāyatrī.¹⁰ Svarūpa.¹¹ Bhūrbhuvah suvah.¹² Tatsavituh.¹³ Varenṇyam Bhargah.¹⁴ Devasya dhīmahi. The Deva is described in the text as playful (līlāmaya), for līlā is a characteristic of Devas.¹⁵ Dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). The Sanskrit in notes 10 to 14 are the portions of the Gāyatrī referred to, though not expressed, in the text.

exists. Lastly, why should He direct Jīva's intelligence if He has not taken upon Himself the lordship of the Brahmāṇḍa? Intelligent Brāhmaṇas will now understand from the Gāyatrī mantra itself whether the Devatā, who forms its subject,¹ is attributeless Brahman or with attribute. Brahman, whom the Gāyatrī seeks to establish, is neither attributeless nor with attribute—that is to say, It is both attributeless and with attribute. A Sādhaka, when he has attained siddhi in the sādhana of Brahman with attribute will, in natural course, lose himself in the attributeless Self.² He need not before this time shut his eyes and see darkness for three ages.³ By Brahman with attribute you and I may understand a small Brahman. But in the eyes of the Śāstra, Brahman is neither small nor great, as you think.

As an aquatic animal must pass through the rivers if it wishes to journey to the sea, so a Jīva must pass through the dualistic world if he wishes to make his way to the Brahman. Śāstra has, therefore, said that to reach mahānirvāṇa, which is His attributeless aspect, one must proceed by the aid of the support of His forms⁴ with attributes. By the term "attributeless" one is not to understand that Brahman has no attribute,⁵ but that, although with attributes,⁶ He is not attached⁷ to them. The Sea is not waterless. But as, notwithstanding its fullness of water, it is the Lord or presiding Devatā over waters, so Brahman, with attribute or attributeless, is, notwithstanding such attributes, Lord or presiding Devatā over attributes. Every attribute bears eternal evidence of the infinite number of attributes of Her in Whom are all attributes.⁸

To say, therefore, that She is attributeless is only to show one's ignorance. The manifestations of Śakti in the forms⁹ of Devas, Dānavas, and men, signify nothing but the spread¹⁰ of attributes belonging to Her who holds the three guṇas. Attachment, inclination, permanence, peace, self-control, patience, error, enjoyment, liberation, devotion, and the like are all nothing but Śakti. Thanks, then, to the tongue of him who says that She is unconscious, She in whose substance hearing, thinking, going, seeing, and other acts of consciousness exist. Whether a person who asks if he has got a tongue has really got it or not, will be understood by others if not by himself. But he, too, ought to understand this much, that if he has not got a tongue, with whose help, then, does he ask: "Have I got a tongue?"

Similarly, an advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,¹¹ ought at least to ask himself under whose influence earthly Jīvas become conscious? If Śakti be not really consciousness, by whose grace do I possess

¹ Pratipādyā.

² Svarūpa.

³ That is, he has not got to wait, but the result follows immediately.

⁴ Mūrti.

⁵ Guṇa.

⁶ Guṇamaya.

⁷ Lipta.

the power of asking whether Śakti is conscious or unconscious? I know not what severe punishment for terrible crimes committed in previous births it is which smites a man so senseless as to cause him to make so delirious a statement as that "Śakti is unconscious". He is saying that of a Śakti the beams of the moon of whose consciousness are powerfully manifested in every vein, every artery, and in every atom of a Jīva's body. Śāstra has said: "O Devī, without a knowledge of Śakti nirvāṇa cannot be attained." Do you think, O Jīva! that you will gain the knowledge of Śaktitattva which leads directly to nirvāṇa liberation, merely by virtue of your being a great polemist, and without the possession of a wealth of sādhana stored by in many previous births?

Are you to possess the wealth which is worshipped by Brahmā and other Devas—the treasure which lies eternally hidden in the storehouse of Sadānanda's heart? Hari, Hari, Hari! You and I want to obtain Her by the force of intelligence, but we fail to realize that we have not the power to understand anything beyond what She, who is the intelligence of even intelligence, has, with proper judgment, given us the competence to understand. Not to speak of anyone else, even Śaṅkarācārya himself, O Sādhaka, played at this sport.

When Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, upholder of the māyā doctrine, preacher of the Vedānta philosophy, and crest-gem of philosophers, arrived at Kāśī after having proved himself a conqueror in every quarter; when followers of other systems of philosophy, wounded all over by the powerful arrows of his arguments, had been dispersed and scattered, he, by some play of the Mother of the world which we know not of, commenced, to the immense joy of the Śaiva community, to hurl relentless thunderbolts on the heart of the Śākta community. For he proceeded to establish that "nothing exists as Śakti" besides Śiva. Śāktas thus sorely oppressed by him, though defeated outwardly by arguments, were undefeated in inner reasoning. They were, however, intensely grieved to see such scepticism¹ proclaimed against the Devatā whom they worshipped. Who but She who dwells in all hearts can realize the intensity of such grief in the hearts of Sādhakas? Śaṅkarācārya, however, could not understand this even then; for his ideas did not go beyond the notion that "Kāśī² belonged to Śiva." It was even then unknown to him that there was also a Mistress³ of Kāśī. The throne of Her who is Śakti in reality, was therefore moved to appease the pangs of the hearts of Sādhakas, and to lift the curtain of error which had fallen upon Śaṅkarācārya, the incarnation of all devotion.⁴

¹ Nāstikavāda.

² The city of Benares.

One day, therefore, Śaṅkarācārya, after an untiring discussion lasting till midday, lay with a wearied body on the Maṇikarnikā ghāt, enjoying in his mind his triumph in having disproved the Śakti doctrine.¹ He then saw a girl of serene appearance slowly approaching the ghāt,² carrying a small pitcher on her lap. Śaṅkarācārya was lying with his head towards the south and feet towards the north, in such a way as to completely block the path. On coming near him, the girl very meekly said: "Bhagavān, please raise your feet so that I may fill my pitcher with water and go away." Śaṅkarācārya said: "Mother, you may step over me. There will be no blame in your doing so." The girl replied: "How can that be? You are a Brāhmaṇa. How can I step over you?" Śaṅkarācārya, proud of his knowledge, said: "Mother, you are an ignorant female, and in that a mere girl. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, female, male—all such differences merely arise from our ignorance.³ In the eyes of the wise everything is, in a spiritual sense, in substance, Brahman. You may pass over me, and will commit no sin thereby." The girl looked greatly grieved, and said: "Lord, you yourself have said that I am an ignorant female, and have no competence for such spiritual knowledge.⁴ I can by no means step over a Brāhmaṇa. Be good enough to raise your feet so that I may pass." Śaṅkarācārya was displeased, and said: "Mother, I have repeatedly told you what to do, and yet you will not hear me? My body is extremely tired, and, moreover, suddenly I feel, I know not why, as if I had not the śakti (strength) even to raise my feet." The girl, who appeared to be somewhat frightened, said: "Lord, pardon me. Had I but known that you had not the śakti to do so, I would never have asked you to raise your feet. I am one who is not fit to understand your spiritual knowledge, and have, in consequence, disturbed you repeatedly through my great fear at having to step over a Brāhmaṇa. Had you, instead of speaking of spiritual knowledge, told me, at the beginning, plainly that 'you had not the śakti to move,' I would myself have raised your feet and gone down to the water. However that may be, if you will now let me, I shall myself raise your feet." Śaṅkarācārya was greatly abashed at these words of the girl, and said: "You may do what you like." The girl then raised his feet with her own hands and put them aside, and then went down to the water, filled the pitcher, and ascended the steps. Śaṅkarācārya, who was lying prostrate with fatigue, called to the girl, and said: "Mother, I have been long thirsty, give me a little water." The girl smiled, and asked: "Why? You are lying on the water-side. How is it, then, that you suffer from thirst?" Śaṅkarācārya replied: "How many times more need I tell

¹ Śaktivāda.² Steps leading down to the river.

you that I have not the śakti to rise?" The girl then rolled her eye,¹ and making the banks of the Ganges resound with Her solemn voice, said: "Śaṅkara, is it not you who ignore Śakti?" Wounded by the echo of that heartpenetrating solemn sound, Śaṅkarācārya, who had been like a sleeping child startled by lightning, shut his eyes for a moment, and then, as he fearfully opened them, he saw that in the angry eyes of the girl waves of unbearable light, such as might proceed from hundreds of suns and moons, were playing. Instantly, as he cried "Mother!" and with outstretched arms rushed to clasp Her feet, the play of that playful Devī closed. The great light of Her who is Light itself,² which had shown itself in the form of a girl, disappeared. None but a kindred sufferer can understand the darkness into which Śaṅkarācārya sank upon the disappearance of that light. The summit of pride of Brahmajñāna³ to which he had risen was shattered into pieces by a single glance of the daughter of the King of Mountains,⁴ as the summit of a mountain is shattered by a thunderbolt. Then, like a blind man who has fallen, like a child which has lost its mother, he wept loudly, and crying, "O my Mother, where have you gone?" ran with breathless speed towards the temple of Annapūrṇā. Now the mother's son belongs to the Mother, and goes to the Mother's temple crying, "Mother!" Although there was nothing strange in this, yet the sight of such an unprecedented change in Śaṅkarācārya, the sceptic about Śakti, charmed the Śāktas with the greatness of the Mother. The temple-yard was filled with their cry: "Victory to the Mother of the world." Surrounded on all sides by the assembly of Śākta devotees, Śaṅkarācārya came to the door of the temple of the Rājarājeśvarī⁵ of the three worlds, the Queen⁶ of the Lord⁷ of Kāśī, and, trembling with fear at having committed so grave an offence, placed his head on the shrine of the feet touched by the heads of Suras and Asuras, of Ādyā Śakti, the Mother of the world. Then, weeping, he said: "O Mother, Śiva is able to maintain His Lordship only if He is united with Śakti; otherwise (if He is separated from Śakti) He is unable not merely to maintain His Lordship, but even (to maintain His own existence) to move His eyes. Explained in another way: According to Tantra, Śakti is denoted by the letter 'i'.⁸ Śiva is Śiva so long only as He is joined with Śakti—that is, with 'i'. The instant He is separated from Śakti—that is, from 'i'—He ceases to be Śiva, and becomes a motionless Śava [corpse]. Thou art, therefore [Ādyā Śakti] an object of worship to even Hari, Hara,

¹ In surprise and resentment.

² Jyotirmayī.

³ Knowledge of Brahman.

⁴ The Devī, who had thus appeared to the philosopher.

⁵ Queen of Queens.

⁶ Adhīśvarī.

⁷ Īśvara.

Viriñci,¹ and others who are themselves worshipped by the world. O Mother, how am I, who have done no act of religious merit, able to bow my head to, or hymn the feet [the lotus-feet, difficult of attainment by the three worlds, at which Brahmā and other Devas lay their heads]—that is to say, unless Thou thyself reveal it, who has the power to know the Śakti-tattva, which is in reality Thyself? Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, who know but a part only of Thy greatness, have sought shelter at Thy feet. That tattva is not revealed to any who have not a store of religious merits acquired by Sādhana in many a previous birth. It is not within the power of Jīvas to know the nature of Tārā,² who is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It is therefore that a Jīva fails to know Thee, O Mother, even though he lies on Thy lap. O Mother, such is my state to-day. Out of fear of the offence I have committed, I have not the courage either to make hymn or to bow to Thee.”

In this manner Śaṅkarācārya made hymn to the Mother of the world by one hundred and three verses, in which he described Her appearance, qualities, and greatness. In the conclusion he said: “To make hymn to Thee with words uttered by Thy grace is like the waving of lights³ before the sun in his worship, or the preparation of Arghya⁴ for the moon with the particles of water secreted by a moon-gem,⁵ or the offering of libations of its own water to the sea.”

Thus gratified, Śaṅkarācārya made provision so that none among the descendants of his disciples might ever be deprived of the wealth of the Sādhana of Śakti, or fall from Tāntrik initiation, notwithstanding that they were Sannyāsins in the Vaidik cult. For this reason we see the Yantra of Śrī⁶ established wherever there are Maṭhas,⁷ temples, and the like, founded amongst such Daṇḍis⁸ as are followers of Śaṅkarācārya. This fact people daily see even at the present time, except that it is in some places openly displayed, and in some places kept secret as Sādhakas, who know the secret, are fully aware.

However that may be, we have something to say about the spiritual error of Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of Śaṅkara, in the incident described above. Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya was an incarnation of Śiva, who is Śakti Herself. It is extremely astonishing that He who has in His original form laid His breast under the feet of Mahāśakti, and

¹ Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā.

² That is, the tattva of Tārā, one of the Mahāvidyās (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ Ārati, or the waving of lights in worship before an image.

⁴ An offering made to show respect to a person on meeting him, or to a Devatā.

⁵ Candrakānta maṇi.

⁶ The Devī.

sunk in Brahma-bliss by resigning Himself to the Brahma-form of Brahmamayi, should, in His incarnate form, commit such an error in respect of Śakti-tattva. We are therefore led to think that it was in order to shatter the pride of knowledge, consisting of eternal ignorance, which filled the followers of the Vedāntik system of philosophy, who were advocates of the Māyā doctrine,¹ deluded by the Māyā of Mahāmāyā, that he first ignored the existence of Her who is perfect and eternal Brahman, and then proclaimed the greatness of the Mother of the world by holding, through Her grace, the ever-triumphant banner of the Tantra Śāstra in his own hand. Otherwise, it is not to be believed that the author of the hymn of which we have quoted the beginning and the end, and which bespeaks a deep and impressive knowledge of the entire Tantra Śāstra, was a disbeliever in Śakti, or did not know or worship Her.

Gaura Candra,² the full-moon of the Sea of Gaura,³ descending upon Navadvīpa,⁴ also belonged to a branch of Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya's followers. His Guru who initiated him in asceticism,⁵ was Swāmī Keśava Bhārati, a disciple in the line of the disciples of the Śaṅkara community. Intelligent Sādhakas will, therefore, easily understand in what system Gaura Candra was initiated, and according to which he was accustomed to worship. Still, we shall try to deal with this subject in its proper place, so far as it will lie in our power.

Sādhaka, whom shall I recognize as a greater philosopher than Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, who played his part in the above-mentioned sport? Where is the advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,⁶ who is himself thereby lowered to the state of some unconscious thing, whose words I shall respect? If Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of Him who possesses all Śaktis, lost the power (śakti) of raising his feet because he said, "There is no Śakti," who are you and I that we should raise our heads to say, "There is no Śakti"?

He is very deeply mistaken who thinks that he can understand the Śakti-tattva by means of philosophical arguments, discussions, and reasonings. If She were a treasure to be acquired by arguments, discussions, and reasonings, for whose sake, then, are sādhanā and bhajana⁷ required? Śaṅkarācārya did not know Her by means of philosophy (darśana). He knew Her in consequence of seeing Her (darśana).⁸ He was not a blind philosopher, like the pandits we meet nowadays. His spiritual

¹ The Māyāvāda, which speaks of Māyā as Avidyā only, and not (ignoring the true nature of Śakti) as both Vidyā and Avidyā.

² The Vaiṣṇavite Saint Caitanya.

³ The country Gaur or Bengal.

⁴ The town of Nadiā, where Caitanya was born.

⁵ Sannyāsa.

⁶ Jada.

eye was painted and made brilliant by the collyrium paint¹ of the light of Her who is ever stainless.² The Mother of the world showed Herself to him, and that sight (darśana) made him (one who sees or) a philosopher (dārśanik). But we unfortunate Jīvas of the Kali age are becoming blind in the name of philosophy (darśana). This is our ill-fortune.³

Is he not the greatest of sceptics⁴ who finds it in him to say that Śakti "does not exist"—the Śakti whose existence has given to Bhagavān the name of "possessor of all Śaktis"? What can be a greater folly than that you, O Jīva, should proceed to discuss the existence or non-existence of the Śakti, whose greatness is preached by Bhagavān; the Śakti whose greatness is such that Bhagavān Himself has, in order that it may be proclaimed, ordained that the name of Śakti should be uttered first, and then that of the possessor of śakti, declaring that he who shall fail to utter the names as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Umā-Maheśvara, Gaurī-Śaṅkara,⁵ and Sītā-Rāma is guilty of a sin as great as that of murdering a Brāhmaṇa. In the uncrossable ocean of Her existence a Brahmāṇḍa-cauldron is less even than a bubble of water.⁶

Is it the Mother's fault or the son's ill-fortune that living in that bubble and even sinking in that ocean, you and I do not see Her; that sitting in the Mother's lap, nourished by the Mother's milk, and tended by the soft fingers of the Mother's hand, the son, born blind, does not see Her? Who does not take birth in his Mother's womb? But for that reason everyone does not have the good fortune of seeing his mother. The graceful and refulgent beauty of the three eyes⁷ of the three-eyed Devī are reflected in the mirror of the eye of him only whose eye of knowledge has been opened by Her mercy, and has been smeared by his guru's kindness with the collyrium paint of love. Śaṅkarācārya has said: "What power has Jīva to see that beauty of Thine, which is visible only to Parama-śiva?"

So I say, O brother Sādhaka, do not forget the Mother's authority and power because you have not yourself got the power to see Her. And you, community of false devotees, who see a difference between Śakti and possessor of śakti, who are partial on the Father's side and inimical

¹ Añjana used to give brilliance to the eyes.

² Nirañjana.

³ A play on the word darśana. Philosophy is so called, as it is supposed to give sight; but is here the cause of blindness.

⁴ Literally, the great-grandfather of sceptics.

⁵ That is, the names of the Śaktis are placed first, and those of the Devas second.

⁶ The universe, which is shaped like a cauldron, is but as a bubble in the limitless ocean of Her being.

to the Mother's side, to you, too, I say, whichever form a Jiva may worship, be it the form of a male or that of a female, the door of liberation is free to him.

He who worships the Father has not to wait to worship the Mother before he can secure liberation; but know it for certain that not even the Father's father has the power to liberate him who worships the Father in a spirit of antagonism to the Mother. Śumbha, Niśumbha, Jambha, Mahiṣāsura,¹ and many others, worshipped the Father in this spirit. But I know not how vast is the mercy of Her who is full of mercy. Enmity cannot touch Her in the least, so that the Devī with dishevelled hair, whom immortals worship, liberated them from the bonds of existence even when in war with them. Nevertheless, by placing Himself in the form of a corpse under the Mother's feet, the Father showed to the Daityas that the garland of pearls of liberation lies ever set and ever stored under the feet of the Devī with dishevelled hair. To put on that garland one must place one's heart under those feet and lose one's self. It is with the view of this truth² that thoughtful devotees of subtle insight have said: "Everyone says 'Father, Father!' no one says 'Mother!' But in the Father court³ the final decision is that which is the Mother's command."

So I say: "O you who discriminate between the Father and the Mother, human birth is difficult of attainment. Open, then, the door of your heart while there is yet time, and with tears in your eyes say for once.

“ ‘A bad son may sometimes be born
But a bad mother never.’ ”⁴

¹ Daityas or demonic beings so named (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.)

² Tattva.

³ Durbar or court held by Rājas etc.

⁴ Kuputro jayeta kvachedapi kumātā nabhavati. This is a quotation from Śaṅkarācārya's hymn "Devīnārāyaṇāya Namo."

CHAPTER X

WORSHIP OF THE FIVE DEVATĀS

BRAHMAN with attributes is the object of adoration in the Gāyatrī worship already mentioned, although attributeless Brahman is the goal. That worship, however, is sufficient and adequate only for the sandhyā-prayers¹ said thrice a day. The sandhyā-prayers may be the only and highest form of worship for him who, disregarding the dualistic Brahmāṇḍa, has profoundly understood the monistic truth, and lost all false dualistic notions concerning the body, senses, mind, and life. Although in the ācamana² of sandhyā, there is something of self-resignation which belong to the province of dualistic perception, yet that is intended only for the casting off of sin. For this reason, this part may be called self-purification instead of self-resignation. However that may be, the loving heart of a devotee cannot rest satisfied with this part only. The sandhyā cannot gratify the heart's desire of Him whose earnest wish is to place everything which he can call his own at Her feet, and to be taken as a slave in return for Her love.

From the Gāyatrī I learn that Mahāśakti, under the aspects of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, is the creatrix, preservatrix, and destructrix according to differences which exist between the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas. But this amount of understanding does not satisfy the mind and heart. Why this play of Hers? What is the process by which this play is regulated? What was Her true aspect³ before this play, and what will Her aspect be after it? Being Herself full of play,⁴ how is She detached from it? How can Jīva, who is but a mere puppet, pass beyond this play and enter into Her real Self? A Jīva's heart is naturally anxious to have the answer to these and other questions.

Secondly, suppose that I understand from the Gāyatrī as much as I can of these matters.⁵ I then understand that She is pure Brahman whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss. But what do I gain by that? I am an impure, unconscious⁶ Jīva. I hear that the sea

¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² A portion of the sandhyā ritual (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ Tattvas.

for it. This Door of liberation is ever free to the access of even the basest and lowest born Caṇḍāla.¹

We do not observe distinction of caste when stepping into a ferry boat; no distinction is made between sinful and virtuous men as regards bathing in the Ganges; and no distinction exists between unmoving objects, moving objects, insects, and the like dying in the region of Benares in respect of their right to Nirvāṇa liberation. In the same way in the boat in which we cross the sea of existence, in the sacred water of the Ganges of knowledge, and in the Benares of Tāntrik initiation extending over the whole Brahmāṇḍa, no bar is set against the initiation of any. In short, just as fire will appropriate anything to itself, so the Tantra will appropriate anyone to the Brahman. The Tāntrik form of initiation is therefore an unfailing means, having no equal, for the liberation of the three worlds.

Why not, then, worship in this manner any one of the three Puruṣa aspects and the three Śakti aspects specified in the Gāyatrī-tattva? There is no fear of such an objection here; for Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, and Sūrya, are the five Devatās mentioned in the Gāyatrī. Of these the worship of Brahmā, in the Tāntrik form, has been abolished by Devaṛṣi Nārada's curse, and in the place of Brahmā the worship of Gaṇeśa, who is an avatāra of Viṣṇu, has been established; in fact, the worship of none of these five Devatās is outside the scope of the Gāyatrī-tattva. It is, therefore, superfluous to say that it is the Devatās of worship according to the Gāyatrī-tattva who are also objects of worship according to the Tāntrik initiation.

Moreover, in the Gāyatrī Mantra five attributive epithets have been used—namely, pervader of the universe, creator of the world, object of worship, playful² Deva, and director of Jīvas' intelligence.³ The Śakti qualified by these five attributes is eternally seated in each one of the five Devatās of worship. The five aspects⁴ are all eternal and perfect Brahman. The Śakti of will, the Śakti of action, and the Śakti of knowledge⁵ are infinite and unlimited in each of them. They are all equally powerful in creating, preserving and destroying, for He is five in one and one in five. Secondly, the aspects for worship in the Gāyatrī-tattva are six,⁶ while the worshipper—that is, I and my mind—are one. It is impossible for a Jīva to adore six aspects with equal love in the same mind. The love, which is to sound constantly in the mind like the note of a

¹ One of the lowest castes.

² Līlāmaya.

⁴ Mūrtis.

³ See *ante*, and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁵ Icchā, Kriyā, and Jñāna Śaktis (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*)

⁶ That is, the six aspects.

tamburā,¹ will be interrupted if transferred from one aspect to another. Śāstra itself has said:

“For one whose mind travels from one state² to another, and so on, there is no liberation, for it is impossible for such a one to perform single-minded Sādhana.” Again: “From morning to evening, and from evening to morning, all that I do, O Mother of the world, is your worship.” Thus, to resign oneself wholly day and night to the lotus-feet of the supreme Devatā; to be dependent on Her protection only by maintenance of an intimate relation with Her at all times, whether in adversity or in prosperity, awaking or sleeping, in life or in death; to feel truly in the heart and say, “My mind knows nothing but Thy beautiful feet”; to sink in the untraversable sea of the thought³ that “I am Mother and the Mother is mine”—such a whole-hearted love for one cannot be formed in respect of six aspects. I know that She is one in six; but my mind cannot be two instead of one in the unbeginning and unending flow of time. How can I offer my one mind to the feet of six persons? How can I love six persons as I love my life? For this reason I must accept some one aspect as the centre of the joy of love, making it the support of my life. Though all aspects are but really Her, yet the three worlds do not possess another aspect similar to that of which the Mantra restores my life, of which the Yantra is the amulet for my safety, and of which the Tantra⁴ is the occupation of my whole lifetime, whether that aspect be dark blue like crushed collyrium,⁵ or fair like a mass of heated gold,⁶ or white like a mountain of silver.⁷ “With Thyself alone, O Mother, can Thyself be compared,” and “O Mother, what Thou art to me, Thou alone art that to me.” The sweetness of Her beauty is not to be judged by these physical eyes of the Jīva. Who but She, who is the only beauty in the world, and who is full of love for devotees, can say whom the eye of love will consider beautiful? Here Deva⁸ Hanumān, a guide⁹ for the journey to the sea of love, has said: “Although from the point of view of spirit there is no difference between Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī, and Rāmacandra the husband of Jānakī, yet lotus-eyed Rāmacandra alone is my all.” That is to say, although there is no real difference between the aspects of Rāma and Nārāyaṇa, yet Rāmacandra is the full-moon of the sea of

¹ A stringed instrument used by singers in keeping up the note.

² Bhāva.

³ Cult, authority.

⁴ The Devī as Śyāmā, Kālī, Tārā, etc.

⁵ The Devī as Umā, Gaurī, Durgā, etc.

⁶ Śiva is thus described.

⁷ That is, She determines for each devotee that which he will regard as most beautiful.

⁸ Hanumān, the monkey, Hanumān, the son of Pavana.

TĀNTRIK INITIATION

The moment a Brāhmaṇa is initiated in the Gāyatrī Mantra, he becomes fundamentally entitled to the five forms of worship. The speciality of Tāntrik initiation is that it matures this title to the point of bearing fruit.¹ Tāntrik initiation indicates the sprouting state of that,² of which the seed is sown by initiation in the Gāyatrī. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has therefore said to Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata:³

“In all parvas⁴ during the year one should perform my Yātrā⁵ and Bali, and should take both Tāntrik and Vaidik initiation, and observe Vrata⁷ in my name.”

Again: “My worship is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (Paurāṇik). I should, therefore, be worshipped according to the rules prescribed in the three Śāstras of Veda, Tantra, and Purāṇa.”

In the Tantra Śāstra, Bhagavān Maheśvara also has laid down the same rule, drawing, however, a distinction between the ages.

In the Kubjikā Tantra it is said: “In the three Yugas of Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara, Devas should be worshipped according to rules prescribed in Śruti and Smṛti. In the Kali Yuga Devas should be worshipped only according to rules prescribed in the Tantra. In the Kali Yuga, Devas are not pleased with worship performed according to rules laid down in any other Śāstra.”⁸

In another Tantra⁹ this has been more clearly stated.

“Performance of Dharma¹⁰ should follow the Vaidik method in the Satya Yuga, the method of Smṛti in the Treta Yuga, the Paurāṇik method in the Dvāpara Yuga, and the Tāntrik method in the Kali Yuga.”

The following passage occurs in the Puraścaraṇa Rasollāsa: “In the Kali Yuga, in Bhāratavarṣa,¹¹ the Dhyānas¹² and Mantras prescribed in Tantra are proper. O Devī of restless glances, O fair-faced lady, the Dhyānas and Mantras prescribed in the Vedas, the Smṛtis, and the Purāṇas are never proper in Bhāratavarṣa in the Kali Yuga.”

¹ A person may be qualified to do a thing, but it does not follow that without further aid he can accomplish it; and this aid the Tāntrik initiation supplies.

² Tattva.

³ Eleventh Skandha.

⁴ Specified occasions for religious observances.

⁵ Festivals such as Dolyātrā, Rathayātrā, etc.

⁶ Worship.

⁷ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁸ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁹ Not stated, but a similar passage occurs in the Kulārṇava Tantra.

¹⁰ Religion.

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said: "My beloved! In the Kali Yuga there is no other path but that path prescribed in Āgama.¹ O spouse of Śiva, it has already been stated by me in Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa, etc., that in the Kali Yuga the wise should worship Devas according to the rules prescribed in Āgama."¹

"In the Kali Yuga the Mantras prescribed in Tantra are naturally efficacious,² speedily bear fruit, and are proper in Japa, Yajña,³ and all other rites. The Mantras of the Veda were fruitful in Satya and other Yugas. In the Kali Yuga they are as impotent as venomless snakes, and are, as it were, dead. Just as the senses of figures pictured on a wall are without action, so in the Kali Yuga Mantras other than those prescribed in Tantra are unable to effect any result."

In the Dattātreyā Yāmala we read: "Just as a person without a guardian has no protection in the world, so a person without initiation has no protection, whether in this world or the next."

In the Gautamīya Tantra it is said: "Just as the sons of the twice-born⁴ who have not received the sacred thread have no right to study the Veda and so forth, but acquire such right by investiture with the sacred thread, so the uninitiated twice-born have no right to recite⁵ Mantras, worship Devas, and so forth, but acquire such right by initiation. For this reason, after investiture with the sacred thread, the twice-born should again purify themselves according to the Śāstra revealed by Śiva."⁶

The following is from the Kulārṇava Tantra: "Tapasyā,⁶ observance of rules;⁷ observance of Vrata,⁶ pilgrimage to Tīrthas,⁸ bodily restraint and other acts, are ineffectual if performed by one who is uninitiated. One should, therefore, by all means be initiated by a Guru."

In the Āgama Sandarbha it is said: "To take the Gāyatrī is the first initiation for the awakening of a knowledge of the Ātmā."

For this reason worship of the Gāyatrī should come first and worship of another (Iṣṭadevatā) according to Tāntrik initiation should follow. This is the proper Tattva⁹ for the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya castes—that is to say, after first taking initiation in the Gāyatrī by the Samskāra¹⁰ of Upanayana,¹¹ one should be initiated according to Tantra in the Mantra of one's Iṣṭadevatā. For Śūdras, for whom there is no Samskāra of Upanayana, the Tāntrik initiation alone is prescribed. In the Kali Yuga initiation in the Gāyatrī, though originally Vaidik, is acceptable only in the form prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra.

¹ The Tantra.

² Siddha.

³ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ Members of the three superior castes.

⁵ Japa.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Niyama.

⁸ Holy shrines.

⁹ Principle, doctrine, line of work.

¹⁰ "Sacrament" (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: "This Sāvitrī,¹ who is Brahman, is as much Tāntrik as Vaidik—that is to say, is proper both in Vaidik and Tāntrik rites. O Devī! for this reason, when the Kali age is in strength the twice-born are entitled to perform daily worship with the Gāyatrī Mantra alone of all Vaidik Mantras. But in the Kali age the Gāyatrī Mantra should be preceded by the Praṇava² in the case of Brāhmaṇas; by the Lakṣmī-bīja³ in the case of Kṣātriyas; and by the Sarasvatī-bīja⁴ in the case of Vaiśyas."

Besides this, the Vaidik Mantras which have been prescribed in Tāntrik rites, such as the ten Samskāras and the like, have, in spite of their Vaidik origin, become Tāntrik owing to their having been repeated by Maheśvara and Maheśvarī in connection with the Tāntrik Method. For this reason, rites performed with those Mantras in the Kali Yuga will not be fruitless.

"O Devī, without Samskāras⁵ the body is not purified, and therefore without them a person is not entitled to perform rites relating to Devas and Pitṛs.⁶ Members of the Brāhmaṇa, and other castes who desire their welfare in this and the next world, should, therefore, by all means, and with care, receive the Samskāras specified for their respective castes. Garbhādhāna, Pumsavana, Simantonnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Chūdākaraṇa, Upanayana, and Vivāha⁷—these are the ten Samskāras prescribed in the Śāstra for Brāhmaṇas, Kṣātriyas, and Vaiśyas. Śūdras and people other than Śūdras—that is to say, the lowest classes of Śūdras—have no Upanayana; so that they have only nine Samskāras, the twice-born castes only having the full ten Samskāras. O fair Lady! these ten Samskāras and all other rites, daily, incidental, or done to gain some reward,⁸ should be performed according to the mode laid down by Śambhu⁹—that is to say, according to the Tāntrik method.

"My beloved, as Brahmā, the revealer of the Vedas, I have already related the rules which should be followed in different rites. Mantras also have been indicated according to different castes, such as Brāhmaṇa and others, for all the Samskāras and other rites. O Kālīkā,¹⁰ in the Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara ages,¹¹ in those rites the Praṇava¹² should precede those Mantras. O Parameśvarī, in the Kali age men should perform those

¹ Gāyatrī Mantra, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² That is, "Om".

³ That is, "Śrīṅ".

⁴ That is, "Aing".

⁵ Sacraments (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ The forefathers (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁷ For a description of these various "sacraments," or Samskāras see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁸ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁹ Śiva.

¹⁰ The Devī.

rites, using the Māyābīja¹ at the commencement of those Mantras by the command of Śaṅkara²—that is to say, according to the Tantra Śāstra. In Nigama, Āgama,³ the Tantras (Gautama, Sanatkumāra, etc.), the Vedas, and the Samhitās,³ I have laid down all Mantras. But in different ages they should be applied in different ways. O Mahāmāyā, I shall next speak of Garbhādhāna and other rites. Of those, here first of all of the purification of the menses,⁴ and next, in their order, of all the other rites.”

From the above Sādhakas will learn that initiation in the Gāyatrī, although originally Vaidik, is Tāntrik in the Kali age.

Again: “In the Kali age men should by all means purify their Ātmā by practice of truth, and perform all the duties prescribed for their respective castes according to the mode prescribed by Myself—that is to say, according to the Tantra Śāstra. Dikṣā,⁵ Pūja,⁶ Japa, Homa, Puraścaraṇa,⁷ Tarpaṇa,⁸ Vrata,⁷ (Upanayana), Vivāha, Pumsavana, Sīmantonnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Cūḍākaraṇa,⁹ Antyeṣṭhikriyā,¹⁰ Śrāddhā of forefathers (Pitṛs), should all be performed according to the Tantra Śāstra. Śrāddhā⁷ in Tīrthas, Vṛṣotsarga,¹¹ Śārādiya Utsava,¹² Yātrā,¹³ Gṛhapraveśa,¹⁴ the putting on of new clothes and the like, consecration¹⁵ of tanks, wells, and the like; rites to be performed on particular Tithis,¹⁶ such as Pratipāda,¹⁷ beginning the construction of a house, the consecration of a house, the establishment of images of Devatās, duties to be performed by day or night on specific occasions¹⁸ in particular seasons or months, or every year, and all other acts daily or incidental to be done or not done, should be governed by the rules prescribed by me. If through delusion or wickedness, any Jīva fails to perform these acts according to Tāntrik rules, he will be deprived of the fruits of all religious performances done by him, and will in the next world be born as a worm in dung. O Maheśvarī, should anyone in the Kali Yuga forsake my cult¹⁹ and perform

¹ That is, “Hṛīṅ”.

² Śiva.

³ See Introduction, *ante*.

⁴ Rtusamskāra, which precedes Garbhādhāna Samskāra.

⁵ Initiation.

⁶ External worship, consisting of the rites beginning with Āvaraṇapūja, and ending with the worship of the principal Deity.

⁷ See Introduction, *ante*.

⁸ Offering, oblations.

⁹ These are various Samskāras, or “Sacraments”, described in *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

¹⁰ Funeral rite.

¹¹ Offering of bulls in Śrāddhas.

¹² The autumnal festival, Durgā Pūja.

¹³ The commencement of journey.

¹⁴ The first entry into a house.

¹⁵ Pratiṣṭha.

¹⁶ Lunar days.

¹⁷ The first day after the new moon or the full moon.

any rite according to another Śāstra, that rite will bear for him fruit contrary to that which he desires. In the Kali age initiation in a cult opposed to mine (prescribed in a Śāstra other than Tantra) will prove to be the destruction of the Sādhaka's life. Pūja performed by him will be fruitless, Homa performed by him will be as the pouring of Ghee into ashes.¹ He will incur the anger of Devas, and will be in danger at every step. O Ambikā, when the Kali age is ripe, should anyone who knows the command of the Śāstra issued from my mouth, perform any rite according to another Śāstra, such a one will be guilty of a great sin. And in particular, if anyone should perform the sacred thread ceremony,² or marriage, according to other methods than those prescribed by me, that man will remain in a terrible hell so long as the sun and moon endure. The performance of Upanayana according to rules laid down by any other Śāstra will be equivalent to the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa.³ And the boy who in such case wears the sacred thread will be fallen⁴ and more degraded than a Caṇḍāla.⁵ The thread, too, worn by him round his neck will be without virtue.⁶ A wife married according to the rites of another Śāstra will not be a legitimate wife, according to Dharma. O Devī, leader in Kula, the man who marries her will sin. By intercourse with her he will daily commit the sin of having intercourse with a prostitute. Devas and the Pitṛs will not accept food and water from his hand. For the food offered by him is like excrement, and the water offered by him is like pus. The child born of that man and woman will be a bastard,⁷ excluded from all religious acts,⁸ and deprived of the right to perform all rites⁹ relating to Devas and Pitṛs, and to be a follower of Kula. Should the image of a Devatā be established by a method other than that ordained by Śambhu, then such Devatā will never appear in such image. The establishment of that image will, therefore, be useless as respects the next world, and will simply spell trouble and waste of money in this. Should anyone perform a Śrāddha according to a method other than that prescribed in Tantra, then that Śrāddha will be useless, and the person so performing it will go to hell with all his forefathers. Water offered by him will be like blood, and piṇḍa¹⁰ offered by him will be like excrement. For this reason, man should by all means seek the shelter of the path prescribed by Śaṅkara. O Devī, what more need I say? Truly, truly, I say, any

¹ It should be poured into fire.

² Upanayana.

³ One of the six great sins. Upanayana is investiture with the sacred thread.

⁴ Vṛātya.

⁵ One of the lowest castes.

⁶ That is, it will be a mere common piece of thread.

⁷ Kānīna: child born of an unmarried woman.

⁸ Dharma.

⁹ Tāntrik rites.

act performed according to any other method than that prescribed by Śambhu will prove of no avail. Not to speak of religious merit to be acquired in future, even that which has been acquired in the past will be destroyed. 'There is no escape from hell for one who follows not the practices ordained by Śambhu. O Maheśvarī, it is by the performance of daily and incidental religious acts according to the path described by me that a person performs your Sādhana. Of these, worship with your Mantra, Yantra, etc., form special Sādhana. I shall now speak of the great remedy for the disease brought about by the Kali age. Do Thou listen to it.'

LOSS OF TANTRAS AND TREATISES ON THIS SCRIPTURE

From these commands of Bhagavān, who is the seat of the welfare of the three worlds, Sādhakas will also surmise what irremediable loss has been caused to the Āryan race through want of knowledge of, and practice according to, the Tantra Śāstra. A large number of treatises on the Tantra Śāstra are required for the proper performance of these religious rites and duties, and it is inevitable that there should be a longing in the hearts of Sādhakas to collect such treatises for the purpose of meeting this requirement.

What, however, is lamentable in this respect, is that the store of medicines has been burnt before the appearance of the disease. The mountain-heap of religious treatises has been almost consumed at the very beginning of the Kali age in the powerful destructive fire of religious revolution. Later on in this book we shall not have the opportunity to mention the names of the treatises of which we have information from original books and compilations on Tantra, and which formed a part of the mass of treatises which has now been almost destroyed. For this reason, before we proceed to deal with the subject of Mantra-tattva,¹ we shall state here, for the information of Sādhakas in connection with the present subject, the names of a few such treatises. From these they will be able to see that when compared with the mass of other treatises on Śāstra,² they form such an insignificant mass that they are lost in the vast womb of the untraversable sea of Tantra so full of deep truths.

Kālivilāsa	Māyātantra	Mālinivijaya
Kamkālamālīnī	Mātṛkābheda	Mahānīla
Muṇḍamālā	Mātṛkodaya	Mahākālasamhitā
Mahīṣamardīnī	Mahānirvāṇa	Pherutantra

¹ The principle of Mantras.

² Apparently Tantra Śāstra, in which case the sense is that the treatises

Bhairavatantra	Yoginīhṛdaya	Āgamādvaitanirṇaya
Bhairavītantra	Yogasvarodaya	Āgamasandarbhā
Bhūṭadāmara	Ākāśabhairava	Āgamasāra
Virabhadra	Rājarājeśvarī	Ādityahṛdaya
Bijacintāmaṇi	Rādhātantra	Uttarakāmākhyā
Ekajaṭā	Revatītantra	Uttaratantra
Nirvāṇatantra	Rudrayāmala	Utpattitantra
Tripurāsāra	Rāmārcanacandrikā	Umāyāmala
Viśvasāra	Śāvaratantra	Ekavīrākālpa
Varadātantra	Indrajālatantra	Kamalātantra
Vāsudevarahasya	Kālitantra	Kamalāvilāsa
Vārāhitantra	Kāmākhyātantra	Kātyāyanītantra
Vṛhadgautamīya	Kāmadhenutantra	Kālīkārcanacandrikā
Varṇoddhṛttitantra	Kālīkulasarvasva	Kālīkalpa
Viṣṇuyāmala	Kumārītantra	Kālīkulasadbhāva
Vṛhannīla	Kṛkalāsadīpikā	Kālīkulāmṛta
Vṛhadyoni	Kālottara	Kālīkulārṇava
Viṣṇurahasya	Kubjikātantra	Kālīkrama
Vāmakeśvara	Kuloḍḍīśa-Kulārṇava	Kālīhṛdaya
Brahmajñānatantra	Kulamūlāvātāra	Kumārīkalpa
Brahmayāmala	Kulaśūtra	Kulacūḍamaṇi
Advaitatantra	Yakṣadāmara	Kulaprakāśa
Varṇavilāsa	Sarasvatītantra	Kulasāra
Phetkārīṇi	Śāradātantra	Kulasundara
Puraścaraṇarasollāsa	Śaktisaṅgama	Kulācāra
Puraścaraṇacandrikā	Śaktikāgamasarvasva	Kulārṇava
Picchilātantra	Ūrddhāmnāya	Kṛṣṇārcanacandrikā
Prapañcasāra	Svatantratatantra	Kaulārcanadīpikā
Hamsa	Sammohanatantra	Kaulāvalī
Parameśvaratantra	Cinācāra	Kramacandrikā
Navaratneśvara	Toḍalatantra	Kramadīpikā
Nityatantra	Buddhatantra	Kṛyāyogasāra
Nilatantra	Ekavīrātantra	Kṛyasāra
Nārāyaṇāyaka	Nigamakalpadruma	Gaṇeśavimarśiṇi
Niruttara	Nigama-kalpalatā	Gandharvatantra
Nārādīya	Nigamasāra	Gāyatrītantra
Nāgādīna	Śyāmārahasya	Guptadīkṣā
Dakṣiṇāmūrtisamlhitā	Tārārahasya	Guptasāadhanā
Yakṣiṇītantra	Skandayāmala	Guptārṇava
Yoginītantra	Annadākālpa	Gurutantra
Yonitantra	Annapūrṇākālpa	Gūḍhārthadīpikā
Yogasāra	Āgamakalpadruma	Gaṇeśavimarśiṇi

Gheraṇḍasamhitā	Pūjāsāra	Vṛhattantrasāra
Cakravacāra	Prapañcasāra	Vṛhattodālātānta
Cīnatantra	Prayogasāra	Vṛhatśrīkramasangraha
Yāmala	Vālāvilāsa	Vṛhadrudrayāmala
Jñānatantra	Brahmayāmala	Vṛhannirvāṇa
Jñānārṇava	Brahmāṇḍatantra	Vṛhanmāyātānta
Dāmara	Bhagavadbhaktivilāsa	Vehāyasīmantrakośa
Tantrakaumudī	Bhavadcūḍamaṇi	Vyomakeśasamhitā
Tantracūḍamaṇi	Bhīmaparākrama	Vyomaratnatānta
Tantradīpikā	Bhuvaneśvarītānta	Śaktiyāmala
Tantrapramoda	Bhuvaneśvaripārijāta	Śaktitānta
Tantrarātna	Bhūtaśuddhitānta	Śambhusaṃhita
Tantrarāja	Bhairavakośa	Śāktakrama
Tantrasāgarasamhitā	Bhairavayāmala	Śāktānandatarangiṇī
Tantrasāra	Bhairavasamhitā	Śāmbhavitānta
Tantrādarśa	Matsyasūkta	Śāradātānta
Tāntrikadarpaṇa	Mantratāntaparakāśa	Śāradatilaka
Tārākhāṇḍa	Mantradarpaṇa	Śāsvatātānta
Tārānigama	Mantramahodadhi	Śikharīṭānta
Tārātānta	Mantramuktāvalī	Śivatāṇḍava
Tārāpradīpa	Mantrarātna	Śivadharmā
Tārābhaktisudhārṇava	Mantrarātnāvalī	Śivarahasya
Tārārṇava	Mahākapilapañcarātra	Śivasangraha
Tārāsāra	Mahākālamohinītānta	Śaivarātna
Tripurākālpa	Mahānīlātānta	Śaivāgama
Tripurārṇava	Mahāliṅgeśvarātānta	Śyāmākālpalātā
Tripurāsārasamucchaya	Mānasollāsa	Śyāmāpradīpa
Trailokyasammohana	Mālinītānta	Śyāmārcanacandrikā
Dakṣiṇāmūrtikalpa	Mṛdāṇītānta	Śyāmāsaparyākrama
Dattātreyayāmala	Merutānta	Śyāmāsaparyāvidhi
Durgākālpa	Yogacintāmaṇi	Śrīkulārṇava
Devīyāmala	Revātānta	Śrītattvacintāmaṇi
Devyāgama	Lakṣasāgara	Śrīrāmasangraha
Nandikeśvarasamhitā	Lakṣmīkulārṇava	Sanatkumārātānta
Nāradapañcarātra	Liṅgārcana	Samayātānta
Nārāyaṇītānta	Varṇabhairava	Samayācārātānta
Nigamakalpasāra	Vāmadevatānta	Sammohanātānta
Nigamatattvasāra	Vāyaviyātānta	Sarasvatītānta
Nibandhātānta	Vārāhītānta	Sārācintāmaṇi
Nṛsimhakālpa	Vidyānandanibandha	Sārasaṃgraha
Paramahamsapaṭāla	Vidyotpattitānta	Sārasamucchaya
		Svārasvatātānta

PREFACE

THIS second part of Tantratattva, the translation of which is primarily the work of S_j. Jñānendralal Majumdar, is the last. In the Preface to the First Part, I spoke of the preparation of a third section, dealing with the philosophical bases of Tantra. I greatly, however, regret to announce the unexpected death of Pandit Shiva Chandra about the middle of this year. This particular project therefore unfortunately falls to the ground, and the work is limited to the dimensions in which it was first issued some twenty-two years ago. The philosophical aspect of the Tantra will, however, be found touched upon in the Introduction from the pen of S_j. Barada Kanta Majumdar which follows, and I have myself further set out my own views on this part of the subject in my forthcoming work "The Six Centres and the Kuṇḍalinī Power."¹ The work here translated is, as already stated, that of an Indian mind unaffected by Western thought. On the other hand, a knowledge of the latter gives a special value to the Introduction which precedes it. Apart from its intrinsic merits, it has such value as being the record of the views of an English-educated Hindu, who finds in the conclusions of recent Western science a corroboration of his ancient Eastern beliefs. Its author is now an old man, to whom the Tantra has been the subject of study for many years. He yet modestly says (see *post*): "I have attempted to give the reader the result of a general survey of the philosophy upon which Tāntrik Sādhana, or self-culture, is based. But in so recondite and unfamiliar a subject, when the correctness of every individual interpretation may be called in question, the reader is requested to go himself to the source, and there, with faith and devotion, and under the guidance of a Guru, drink of its waters."

So far as I have examined the matter, I find myself to be in general agreement with his statements as to what constitutes the teaching of the Tantra on the matters dealt with. This agreement does not, however, necessarily extend to every statement or to all matters of detail. Some of these are open to discussion, as he admits. I should, for instance, myself dispense with the "magnetic current" to which the Introduction refers with reference to the worship of images, and would deal with the matter as one of purely transformed consciousness in the worshipper himself.

age. The Mahābhārata, Harivamsa, Kālikā, Mārkaṇḍeya, and Kūrma Purāṇas also refer to the consumption of wine, meat, and flesh. As regards "the fifth," even if we exclude Upaniṣads and other Śāstras which are alleged by some to be of sectarian authority only, we find a ritual use of that Tattva, though doubtless in different form, in the Mahāvratā of the Aitareya Āraṇyaka and in the Vāmadevyam Vratā of the Sāma Veda. In this connection reference may be made to the Brahmaivaivartā Purāṇa. Magic, again, with which the Tantra has been particularly charged, forms a large part of the Atharva Veda.

Then, as to the worship of Śakti or Devī, reference is made to Her in the Veda, such as the Sarasvatisūkta, in the Yajur Veda the Lakṣmī Sūkta, and in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Ṛg Veda the Devī Sūkta;¹ and we have in the Upaniṣads² the story of Umā appearing in a blaze of light to Indra and the other Devas, to prove to them that it was not by their śakti that they lived and moved, but that all which was done was so done by virtue of that Mahāśakti. Touching this subject, nothing more is taught by the Tantra, though one portion of it has doubtless greatly elaborated, both on its theoretical and practical side, the magnificent doctrine of Śakti, or the Power or Energy of the Brahman whereby the Universe originates. Though this notion of Śakti is of great importance in the Tantra, it is by no means the peculiar appanage of that Scripture, but is, like other concepts, shared by it with other Indian Śāstras, commencing, as above mentioned, with the Mūlāsāstra—that is, the Vedas and Upaniṣads. It is, however, of special importance in Tantra, because one of its schools has developed, presented, and emphasized the doctrine, and has moulded its scheme of sādhana and worship in such a way as to be the practical expression of its form of theoretical exposition. Thus, on the one hand, we have in what are called for convenience the Śākta Tantras, a philosophical doctrine of Śakti fully developed on the one side (Jñānakāṇḍa), and devotion to and worship of the World-Mother on the other (Upāsana-kāṇḍa). As the notion of Śakti is accepted by other classes of Indian worshippers,³ the promulgation of this cult has historically done much to weld together the different Indian sects through the recognition of a bond of common unity which the acceptance of the doctrine of Śakti implies. To this the Śaktisāṅgama Tantra³ refers when it says: "For the purpose

¹ See Introduction to Part I.

² In varying ways—thus some worship Śaktimān, "He who is the possessor of Śakti" in varying Deva forms; others worship Śakti Herself—philosophically there is no difference, as the possessor of Śakti and Śakti are one and the same.

³ Eighth Patala cited with text in N. S. 1. 1. 1.

of creation various religions have been promulgated, such as those of the Śāktas (worshippers of Śakti), Śaivas (worshippers of Śiva), Vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Viṣṇu), Gaṇapātyas (worshippers of Gaṇeśa), Sauras (sun worshippers), and Buddhists, and many others. These sects often blame one another, and yet a harmony may be found. Explanation has been given of these doctrines in order to bring about this unity. In order to attain this all should worship the Devī Kālīkā, the Saviour (Tārīṇī). I have promulgated the Śākta cult in order to demonstrate the unity of the fourteen branches of knowledge.¹ The Goddess Bhavatārīṇī is the Deity presiding over the four Vedas, and the Goddess Kālīkā is the Deity presiding over the Atharva Veda. Though different sects find fault with one another, a harmony may be established between the seemingly contrary doctrines. In order to bring about this desired harmony all sects should worship Kālīkā, the Saviour of the world. Rites, according to the Atharva Veda, cannot be performed without Kālī or Tārā.² She is called Kālīkā in Kerala (Malabar), Tripura in Kashmir, and Tārā in Gauḍa (Bengal). She is the Kālottara or chief Divinity of Kālottarayāna.³

"It appears," says the author of the work last cited, "that from the above passages of the Śaktisāngama Tantra the Śākta or Tantrika cult was promulgated in order to effect harmony among the various jarring sects. The result was that all the sects began to worship the female Energies of their own respective Deities.⁴ Some accepted a few Śaktis, others accepted many.

"This is perhaps the reason," he adds, "of the great fellow-feeling between the Hindu and the Buddhist Śāktas, as well as of the rites of the one being found in the Tantras of the other, and *vice versa*, for, according to Dr. Kern,⁵ the development of Tantrism is a feature that Buddhism and Hinduism in their later phases have in common."

So far I have referred only to what are called the Śākta Tantras, or those Tantras which predominantly⁶ deal with the worship of Śakti or Devī, the great Mother of the Universe. Thus, in the Śaiva Tantras, or rather in the Śaiva (as distinct from Śākta) worship, governed by the

¹ That is, as the verse says, Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsa, Sāmkhya, Patañjala, Vedānta, Dharmasāstra, Aṅga, Chhaṇḍa, Astronomy, and the four Vedas.

² Vinā kāling vinā tārāṅ nātharvvaṇo vidhi kvachit. See last note.

³ One of the Buddhist sects.

⁴ Thus establishing a common worship of Śakti, whatever be the form the latter might assume in the different sects.

⁵ "Manual of Indian Buddhism," p. 133.

⁶ I.e., all Tantrik cults Śakti is worshipped: for where Śiva or Visnu is the

teaching. A want of knowledge was here displayed. Why, he queried, had I dealt with the Sāmkhya, thereby "creating for the thousand and first time the false impression that the Tantra was concerned with it." This criticism, which is a display of ignorance, might equally well be directed against the work here translated, which not only cites the Tantra, but also the Purāṇas, Darśanas, Smṛti, and Vedas.

The answer is the simple one that I dealt with some of the notions of the Sāmkhya because they are expressly incorporated in the Tantras and Tāntrik works with which I was conversant. I may refer my reader by way of example to the first chapter of the celebrated Prapañcasāra Tantra,¹ and to the well-known and authoritative treatise, Śāradā Tilaka. From what source other than the Sāmkhya did the former derive its notions of Puruṣa, Prakṛti, Buddhi, Ahaṅkāra, and the other Tattvas, the Guṇas, and so forth? And of a passage in the second, the great Tāntrik Commentator Rāghava Bhatta expressly says: "Here the Sāmkhya doctrine is exposed." From what source again but the Vedānta does the Tantra derive those doctrines which reconcile the Sāmkhyan dualism in the unity of the Brahman? The Tantra, in fact, could not claim to be an authoritative Indian Śāstra if it did not recognize commonly accepted Indian doctrines.

According to orthodox teaching, all Śāstras, just as truth itself, constitute a unity. Otherwise the Tantra would be a mere sectarian Scripture out of all relation with common Indian beliefs, and essentially foreign to them. But a Scripture which is not in essential agreement with other Śāstras is itself no Śāstra at all. The Śāstra, therefore, generally accepts and incorporates such common beliefs, though it may present them in its own peculiar way and terminology, and though it seeks practically to realize them by its own peculiar methods. It is in fact the latter which is the chief characteristic of this Śāstra. The sphere of Indian religion has three departments, respectively known as Karmakāṇḍa (or formal ritual in its Vaidik sense), Upāsana Kāṇḍa (or psychological worship), and Jñāna Kāṇḍa (or esoteric knowledge). It is the second which is the peculiar subject of Tantra. Thus, again, it is said that ritual in its widest sense, as including both Karma and Upāsana, is threefold—that is, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and Mixed (Miśra), or Paurāṇik. But each of these, according to Indian teaching, has in common certain philosophic and religious doctrinal bases. When I speak of "the Tantra," I refer to what passes under that name to-day² so far as it is known to me, and not some hypothetical doctrine of past time of which at present we know with certainty nothing. In a review, however, of the first volume of this work an Indian

¹ Published as the third volume of my "Tantrik Texts".

² Similarly, in the letter of Preface.

writer, in the *Prabuddha Bhārata* ¹ made the following remarks on what he believes to be the origin of the Tantra. His speculations, whether correct or not, are of such interest that I quote them in full. He writes:

“Hitherto all theories about the origin and the importance of the Tantras have been more or less prejudiced by a wrong bias against Tāntrikism which some of its own later sinister developments were calculated to create. This bias has made almost every such theory read either like a condemnation or an apology. All investigation being thus disqualified, the true history of Tāntrikism has not yet been written; and we find cultured people mostly inclined either to the view that Tāntrikism originally branched off from the Buddhistic Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna as a cult of some corrupted and self-deluded monastics or to the view that it was the inevitable dowry which some barbarous non-Āryan races brought along with them into the fold of Hinduism. According to both these views, however, the form which this Tantrikism—either a Buddhistic development or a barbarous importation—has subsequently assumed in the literature of Hinduism is its improved edition as issuing from the crucibles of Vedic or Vedāntic transformation. But this theory of the curious co-mingling of the Vedās and Vedānta with Buddhistic corruption or with non-Āryan barbarity is perfectly inadequate to explain the all-pervading influence which the Tantras exert on our present-day religious life. Here it is not any hesitating compromise that we have got before us to explain, but a bold organic synthesis, a legitimate restatement of the Vedic culture for the solution of new problems and new difficulties which signalized the dawn of a new age.

“In tracing the evolution of Hinduism, modern historians take a blind leap from Vedic ritualism direct to Buddhism, as if to conclude that all those newly formed communities with which India had been swarming all over since the close of the fateful era of the Kurukṣetra war, and to which was denied the right of Vedic sacrifices, the monopoly of the higher threefold castes of pure orthodox descent, were going on all the time without any religious ministrations. These Āryanized communities, we must remember, were actually swamping the Vedic orthodoxy, which was already gradually dwindling down to a helpless minority in all its scattered centres of influence, and was just awaiting the final blow to be dealt by the rise of Buddhism. Thus the growth of these new communities and their occupation of the whole land constituted a mighty event that had

doctrine prêchée, par Sakyamuni; j'appelle Bouddhisme l'état général de croyance qui s'est condensé autour du nom du Buddha.” In the case of the Tantra the reasons for such a course are much stronger; for whilst we do know something of Buddhism, those of the Tantra are obscure.

¹ A journal published at the Māyāvati Āśrama, founded by the late

been silently taking place in India on the outskirts of the daily shrinking orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism, long before Buddhism appeared on the field, and this momentous event our modern historians fail to take due notice of, either, it may be, because of a curious blindness of self-complacency or because of the dazzle which the sudden triumph of Buddhism and the overwhelming mass of historical evidences left by it create before their eyes. The traditional Kali Yuga dates from the rise of these communities, and the Vedic religious culture of the preceding Yuga underwent a wonderful transformation along with the wonderful attempt it made to Āryanize these rising communities.

"History, as hitherto understood and read, speaks of the Brāhmins of the pre-Buddhistic age—their growing alienation from the Jñāna-kāṇḍa or the Upaniṣadic wisdom, their impotency to save the orthodox Vedic communities from the encroachments of the non-Vedic hordes and races, their ever-deepening religious formalism and social exclusiveness. But this history is silent on the marvellous feats which the Upaniṣadic sects of anchorites were silently performing on the outskirts of the strictly Vedic community, with the object of Āryanizing the new India that was rising over the ashes of the Kurukṣetra conflagration. This new India was not strictly Vedic, like the India of the bygone ages, for it could not claim the religious ministrations of the orthodox Vedic Brāhmins, and could not therefore perform Yajñas like the latter. The question, therefore, is as to how this new India became gradually Āryanized, for Āryanization is essentially a spiritual process, consisting in absorbing new communities of men into the fold of the Vedic religion. The Vedic ritualism that prevailed in those days was powerless, we have seen, to do anything for these new communities springing up all over the country. Therefore we are obliged to turn to the only other factor in Vedic religion besides the Karma-kāṇḍa for an explanation of those changes which the Vedic religion wrought in the rising communities in order to Āryanize them. The Upaniṣads represent the Jñāna-kāṇḍa of the Vedic religion, and if we study all of them, we find that not only the earliest ritualism of Yajñas was philosophized upon in the earlier Upaniṣads, but the foundation for a new, and no less elaborate, ritualism was fully laid in many of the later Upaniṣads. For example, we study in these Upaniṣads how the philosophy of Pañca-upāsana (fivefold worship—viz., the worship of Śiva, Devī, Sun, Gaṇeśa, and Viṣṇu) was developed out of the mystery of the Praṇava ('Om'). This philosophy cannot be dismissed as a post-Buddhistic interpolation, seeing that some features of the same philosophy can be clearly traced even in the Brāhmaṇas—e.g., the discourse about the conception of Śiva.

"Here, therefore, in some of the later Upaniṣads we find recorded the attempts of the pre-Buddhistic recluses of the forest to elaborate a

theory of Yogic practices. Here in these Upaniṣads we find how the Bija-mantras and the Ṣaṭcakra of the Tantras were being originally developed, for on the Praṇava or Udgitha had been founded a special learning and a school of philosophy from the very earliest ages, and some of the 'spinal' centres of Yogic meditation had been dwelt upon in the earliest Upaniṣads and corresponding Brāhmaṇas. The Upakaraṇas of Tāntrik worship—namely, such material adjuncts as grass, leaves, water and so on—were most apparently adopted from Vedic worship along with their appropriate incantations. So even from the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads stands out in clear relief a system of spiritual discipline—which we would unhesitatingly classify as Tāntrik—having as its core the Pañca-upāsanā, and around it a fair round of rituals and rites consisting of Bija-mantras and Vedic incantations, proper meditative processes and proper manipulation of sacred adjuncts of worship adopted from the Vedic rites. This may be regarded as the earliest configuration which Tāntrikism had on the eve of those silent but mighty social upheavals through which the Āryanization of vast and increasing multitudes of new races proceeded in pre-Buddhistic India, and which had their culmination in the eventful centuries of the Buddhistic *coup de grace*.

"Now, this pre-Buddhistic Tāntrikism, perhaps then recognized as the Vedic Pañca-upāsanā, could not have contributed at all to the creation of a new India, had it remained confined completely within the limits of monastic sects. But, like Jainism, this Pañca-upāsanā went forth all over the country to bring ultra-Vedic communities under its spiritual ministrations. Even if we inquire carefully into the social conditions obtaining in the strictly Vedic ages, we find that there was always an extended wing of the Āryanized society where the purely Vedic Karmakāṇḍa could not be promulgated, but where the moulding influence of Vedic ideals worked through the development of suitable spiritual activities. It is always to the Jñānakāṇḍa and the monastic votaries thereof that the Vedic religion owed its wonderful expansiveness and its progressive self-adaptability, and every religious development within the Vedic fold, but outside the ritualism of Homa sacrifices, is traceable to the spiritual wisdom of the all-renouncing forest recluses. This 'forest' wisdom was most forcibly brought into requisition when, after the Kurukṣetra, a new age was dawning with the onrush and upheaval of non-Āryan and semi-Āryan races all over India—an echo of which may be found in that story of the Mahābhārata, where Arjuna fails to use his Gāṇḍīva to save his *protégés* from the robbery of the non-Āryan hordes.

"The greatest problem of the pre-Buddhistic ages was the Āryanization of the new India that rose and surged furiously from every side against the fast-dwindling centres of the old Vedic orthodoxy struggling hard, but

those religious movements, such as those of the Bhagavatas, Śāktas, Sauras, Śaivas, Gāṇapatyas, and Jains, that tackled this problem of Āryanization most successfully, all that the Vedic orthodoxy stood for in the real sense would have gradually perished without trace. These movements, specially the five cults of Vedic worship, took up many of the non-Āryan races, and cast their life in the mould of the Vedic spiritual ideal, minimizing in this way the gulf that existed between them and the Vedic orthodoxy, and thereby rendering possible their gradual amalgamation. And where this task remained unfulfilled owing to the mould proving too narrow still to fit into the sort of life which some non-Āryan races or communities lived, there it remained for Buddhism to solve the problem of Āryanization in due time. But, still, we must remember that by the time Buddhism made its appearance, the pre-Buddhistic phase of Tāntrik worship had already established itself in India so widely and so firmly that, instead of dislodging it by its impetuous onset—all the force of which, by the by, was mainly spent on the tottering orthodoxy of Vedic ritualism—Buddhism was itself swallowed up within three or four centuries by this Tāntrik worship, and then wonderfully transformed and ejected on the arena as the Mahāyāna.

"The latest configuration of Tāntrikism dates from this, its wonderful absorption and assimilation of Buddhism, and from this important fact it derives some important features of its later development. The prophecy of Gautama Buddha on the eve of investing his aunt with *Abhisampāda* or *Sannyāsa* was fulfilled too literally when the proximity and free intercourse between the two orders of monks and nuns created in Buddhist history that odious problem of their religious life which they had to solve by introducing some mysterious rites, the philosophy of which, however, can be traced in the Vedas. No wonder if the current of such developments grew deeper and dirtier in time; only it is alleviating that there were cross-currents of constant correction flowing from Vedāntic sources. Neither is it possible to deny that the Buddhistic phase of Tāntrikism absorbed into the fold of Hinduism non-Āryan conceptions and rites of worship far more promiscuously than its pre-Buddhistic phase; but history proves that the digestive and secretive processes, as it were, have ever since been working, tardily sometimes, but successfully always, and the Tantras, as the marvellous restatement of the Vedās and the Vedānta, have at last appeared in the boldest relief through that miraculous embodiment of the synthetic spirituality of the whole race which we have to recognize to-day by the name of Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa."

The writer adds that a "vindication of the Tantras redounds directly to the benefit of Hinduism as a whole," for, in his opinion, "Tāntrikism in its real sense is nothing but the Vedic religion struggling with wonderful success to reassert itself amidst all those new problems of religious life and

Of equal interest with the above is the following extract from another review by the well-known Bengali *litterateur* Sj. Panchkori Bandyopādhyāya in the Calcutta journal *Sāhitya*.¹ This article, from which I omit passages personal to myself or touching the book there criticized, deals with the history of the Tantra in quite recent times in Bengal. Sj. Panchkori Bandyopādhyāya writes:

“At one time the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra had some popularity in Bengal. It was printed and published under the editorship of Pandit Ānanda-candra Vedāntavāgīśa, and issued from the Ādi-Brahma-Samāj Press. Rājā Rām Mohan Roy himself was a follower of the Tantras, married after the Śaiva form, and used to practise the Tāntrik worship. His spiritual preceptor, Svāmī Hariharānanda, was well known to be a saint who had attained to perfection (siddha-puruṣa). He endeavoured to establish the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra as the Scripture of the Brahma-Samāj. The formula and the forms of the Brahma Church are borrowed from the initiation into Brahman worship (Brahma-dīkṣā) in this Tantra. The later Brāhmos, somewhat losing themselves in their spirit of imitation of Christian rituals, were led to abandon the path shown to them by Rājā Rām Mohan; but yet even now many among them recite the Hymn to the Brahman which occurs in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. In the first era of the excessive dissemination of English culture and training, Bengal resounded with opprobrious criticisms of the Tantras. No one among the educated in Bengal could praise them. Even those who called themselves Hindus were unable outwardly to support the Tāntrik doctrines. But even then there were very great Tāntrik Sādhakas and men learned in the Tantras, with whose help the principles of the Tantras might have been explained to the public. But the educated Bengali of the age was bewitched by the Christian culture, and no one cared to inquire what did or did not exist in their paternal heritage; the more especially that any who attempted to study the Tantras ran the risk of exposing themselves to contumely from the educated community. Mahārāja Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore, of sacred name, alone published two or three works, with the help of the venerable Pandit Jaganmohan Tarkālankāra. The Hara-tattva-dīdhiti associated with the name of his father is even now acknowledged to be a marvellously glorious production of the genius of the Pandits of Bengal. The venerable (vṛddha) Pandit Jaganmohan also published a commentary on the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Even at that epoch such study of the Tantras was confined to a certain section of the educated in Bengal. Mahārāja Sir Jatindra Mohan alone endeavoured to understand and appreciate men like Bāmā Khepā (mad Bāmā), the Naked Father (Nyāmṭā Bābā) of Kaḍḍa and Svāmī Sadānanda. The educated

community of Bengal had only neglect and contempt for Sādhakas like Bishe Pāglā (the mad Bishe), and Binu, the Candāla woman. Bengal is even now governed by the Tantra; even now the Hindus of Bengal receive Tāntrik initiation. But the glory and the honour which the Tantra had and received in the time of Mahārājas Kṛṣṇa Candra and Śivacandra no longer exist. This is the reason why the Tāntrik Sādhakas of Bengal are not so well known at present. . . .

"The special virtue of the Tantra lies in its mode of Sādhana. It is neither mere worship (Upāsana) nor prayer. It is not lamenting or contrition or repentance before the Deity. It is the Sādhana which is the union of Puruṣa and Prakṛti; the Sādhana which joins the male principle and the mother element within the body, and strives to make the attributed attributeless. That which is in me and that for which I am (this consciousness is ever present in me) is spread like butter in milk, throughout the created world of moving and unmoving things, through the gross and the subtle, the conscious and unconscious—through all. It is the object of Tāntrik Sādhana to merge that self-principle (Svarāt) into the Universal (Virāt). This Sādhana is to be performed through the awakening of the forces within the body. A man is Siddha in this Sādhana when he is able to awaken Kuṇḍalinī and pierce the six Cakras. This is not mere 'philosophy'—a mere attempt to ponder upon husks of words—but something which is to be done in a thoroughly practical manner. The Tantras say: 'Begin practising under the guidance of a good Guru; if you do not obtain favourable results immediately, you can freely give it up.' No other religion dares to give so bold a challenge. We believe that the Sādhana of the Moslems, and the 'esoteric religion' or secret Sādhana (and rituals) of the Christians of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches, is based on this groundwork of the Tantras.

"Wherever there is Sādhana we believe that there is the system of the Tantra. While treating of the Tantras some time back in the *Sāhitya*, I hinted at this conclusion, and I cannot say that the author Arthur Avalon has not noticed it too. For he has expressed his surprise at the similarity which exists between the Roman Catholic and the Tāntrik mode of Sādhana. The Tantra has made the Yoga system of Patañjali easily practicable, and has combined with it the Tāntrik rituals and the ceremonial observances (Karmakāṇḍa); that is the reason why the Tāntrik system of Sādhana has been adopted by all the religious sects of India. If this theory of the antiquarians—that the Tantra was brought into India from Chaldea or Śākadvīpa—be correct, then it may also be inferred that the Tantra passed from Chaldea to Europe. The Tantra is to be found in all the strata of Buddhism; the Tāntrik Sādhana is manifest in Confucianism; and Sintoism is but another name of the Tāntrik system of Sādhana.

which was prevalent in Egypt from ancient times, spread into Phoenicia and Greece. Consequently we may suppose that the influence of the Tantras was felt in primitive Christianity.

“The Tantra contains nothing like idolatry, or ‘worship of the doll,’ which we, taking the cue from the Christian missionaries, nowadays call it. . . . The Tantra repeatedly says that one is to adore the Deity by becoming a Deity (Devatā) himself. The Iṣṭa-devatā is the very self of Ātman, and not separate from It; He is the receptacle of all, yet He is not contained in anything, for He is the great witness, the eternal Puruṣa. The true Tāntrik worship is the worship in and by the mind. The less subtle form of Tāntrik worship is that of the Yantra. Form is born of the Yantra. The form is made manifest by Japa, and awakened by Mantra Śakti. Tens of millions of beautiful forms of the Mother bloom forth in the heavens of the heart of the Siddha puruṣa. Devotees or aspirants of lower order of competency (nimna-adhikārī), under the directions of the Guru, adore the great Māyā by making manifest (to themselves) one of Her various forms which can be only seen by Dhyāna (meditation). That is not mere worship of the idol; if it were so, the image would not be thrown into the water; no one in that case would be so irreverent as to sink the earthen image of the Goddess in the water. The Primordial Śakti is to be awakened by Bhāva, by Dhyāna, by Japa, and by the piercing of the six Cakras. She is all-will. No one can say when and how She shows Herself, and to what Sādhaka. We only know that She is, and there are Her names and forms. Wonderfully transcending is Her form—far beyond the reach of word or thought. This has made the Bengali Bhakta (devotee) sing this plaintive song:

‘Hard indeed is it to approach the sea of forms, and to bathe in it.

Ah me! this my coming is perhaps in vain.’

“The Tantra deals with another special subject—Mantra Śakti. . . . The Tantras say that the soul in the body is the very self of the letters—of the Dhvani (sound). The Mother, the embodiment of the fifty letters (Varṇa), is present in the various letters in the different Cakras. Like the melody which issues when the chords of a lute are struck, the Mother who moves in the six Cakras, and who is the very self of the letters, awakens with a burst of harmony when the chords of the letters (Varṇas) are struck in their order. Then Siddhi becomes as easy of attainment to the Sādhaka as the keeping of an Amalaka fruit in one’s hand when She is roused. That is why the great Sādhaka Rāmaprasāda awakened the Mother by the invocation—‘Arise. O Mother’ (Jāgrhi, janani). That is the reason why the Bhakta sang:

‘How long wilt thou sleep in the Mūlādhāra, O Mother Kula-

“The Bodhana (awakening) ceremony in the Durga Pūja is nothing but the awakening of the Śakti of the Mother, the mere rousing of the consciousness of the Kuṇḍalinī. This awakening is performed by Mantra Śakti. The Mantra is nothing but the harmonious sound of the lute of the body. When the symphony is perfect, She who embodies the Worlds (Jaganmayī) rouses Herself. When She is awake, it does not take long before the union of Śiva and Śakti takes place. Do Japa once; do Japa according to rule, looking up to the Guru, and the effects of Japa of which we hear in the Tantra will prove to be true at every step. Then you will understand that the Tantra is not mere trickery, or a false weaving out of words. What is wanted is the good Guru—Mantra capable of granting Siddhi, and application (Sādhana). . . .

“The Tantra accepts the doctrine of rebirth. It does not, however, acknowledge it as a mere matter of argument or reasoning, but like a geographical map, it makes clear the unending chain of existences of the Sādhaka. The Tantra has two divisions—the Dharma of Society (Samāja), and that Dharma of Spiritual Culture (Sādhana). According to the regulation of Samāja-Dharma, it acknowledges birth and caste. But in Sādhana Dharma there is no caste distinction, no Brāhmaṇa or Śūdra, no man or woman; distinctions between high and low follow success in Sādhana and Siddhi. We only find the question of fitness or worthiness (Adhikāra-tattva) in the Tantra. This fitness (Adhikāra) is discovered with reference to the Samskāras (tendencies) of past existences; that is why the Caṇḍāla Pūrṇānanda is a Brāhmaṇa, and Kṛpāsiddha the Sādhaka is equal to Sarvānanda; that is why Rāmaprasāda of the Vaidya caste is fit to be honoured even by Brāhmaṇas. The Tantra is to be studied with the aid of the teachings of the Guru, for its language is technical, and its exposition impossible with a mere grammatical knowledge of roots and inflections. The Tantra is only a system of Śakti-Sādhana. There are rules in it whereby we may draw Śakti from all created things. There is nothing to be accepted or rejected in it. Whatever is helpful for Sādhana is acceptable. This Sādhana is decided according to the fitness of the particular person (Adhikāri-anusāre). He must follow that for which he is fit or worthy. Śakti pervades all, and embraces all beings and all things—the inanimate and the moving, beasts and birds, men and women. The unfolding of the powers (Śakti) enclosed within the body of the animal (Jīva) as well as the man is brought about only with the help of the tendencies within the body. The mode of Sādhana is ascertained with regard to these tendencies. The very meaning of Sādhana is unfolding, rousing up or awakening of power (Śakti). Thus the Śākta obtains power from all actions in the world. The Sādhana of the Tantra is not to be measured by the little measuring rod of the ordinary religious

“ ‘ Let you understand, and I understand, O my mind!

Whether anyone else understands it or not.’

“ The Tantra has no notion of some separate far-seeing God. It preaches no such doctrine in it as that God the Creator rules the Universe from heaven. In the eye of the Tantra the body of the Sādhaka is the Universe, the autokratos (Ātma-śakti) within the body is the desired (Iṣṭa), and the ‘ to be sought for ’ (Sādhya) Deity (Devatā) of the Sādhaka. The unfolding of this self-power is to be brought about by self-realization (Ātma-darśana), which is to be achieved through Sādhana. Whoever realizes his self attains to liberation (Mukti). . . . The principles of the Tantra must be lectured on to the Bengali afresh. If the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra as now translated is spread abroad, if the Bengali is once more desirous to hear, that attempt might well be undertaken.

“ Our land of Bengal used to be ruled by Tāntrik works such as the Śāradātilaka, Śāktānandatarangīnī, Prāṇatoṣīnī, Tantrasāra, etc. Then the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra did not have so great an influence. It seems to us that considering the form into which, as a result of English education and culture, the mind and intellect of the Bengali has been shaped, the Mahānirvāṇa is a proper Tantra for the time. Rājā Rām Mohan Roy endeavoured to encourage regard for the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra because he understood this. If the English translation of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra is well received by the thoughtful public in Bengal, the study of the original Sanskrit work may gradually come into vogue. This much hope we may entertain. In fact, the English-educated Bengali community is without religion (Dharma) or action (Karma), and is devoid of the sense of nationality (Dharma), and caste. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra alone is fit for the country and the race at the present time. . . . An auspicious opportunity for the English-knowing public to understand the Tantra has arrived. It is a counsel of the Tantra itself that if you desire to renounce anything, renounce it only after a thorough acquaintance with it; if you desire to embrace anything new, accept it only after a searching inquiry. The Tantra embodies the old religion (Dharma) of Bengal. Even if it is to be cast away for good, that ought only to be done after it has been fully known. . . . Will not the Bengali receive with welcome such a full offering (Arghya) made from a foreign land? ”

Whether (as the writer of this article and of the Introduction which follows contend) the doctrines and ritual of orthodox Hinduism are suitable for the India of to-day is a matter for its people to decide. I have cited this highly interesting appeal to stand on ancient ways because, to use the language of a friend of mine, and student of the Buddhist Tantra, it is “ pleine de détails intéressants et révèle d’une façon très claire l’état d’esprit des Bengalis—je crois que l’on pourrait même dire des Hindous

Even if this statement be held to go too far, it has certainly a very wide application, and it is for this very reason that, in a study of the Indian religions, the Tantra is of such importance.

KONARAK,
December 31, 1914.

ARTHUR AVALON

INTRODUCTION

VAIDIK AND TĀNTRIK SYSTEMS OF SPIRITUAL CULTURE COMPARED

As the Vedas are the Word of Brahmā, so are the Tantras the Word of Śiva. Both are the Breath of the Supreme. It is not to be supposed that the Hindus look upon the Vedas or the Tantras in the same light as the Christians, Jews, and Muhammadans regard the Revelation on Mount Sinai, or the Koran. The Hindus have never said that the Godhead, having assumed a human form, descended and revealed: Divine knowledge in human language to His chosen; nor do they hold that God or one of His Angels wrote out the Divine Revelation, and then handed it over to His Rasool. The meaning of Hindu Revelation is different from that which is generally assumed. The Breath of the Supreme is pure Divine Ideation, from which is evolved the universe. Sitting on His Cosmic lotus-throne, alone in the primeval darkness of immense space, Hiranyagarbha, the infant Brahmā, the progenitor of the manifested universe, knew not yet what He was nor what He had to do. Long years of meditation at length revealed to Him the Divine Law, which is Divine knowledge (Jñāna), thus enabling Him to evolve the universe. From Brahmā to the hosts of illuminated Ṛṣis all are Seers or revealers of the arcane (immutable knowledge), which, like respiration, comes forth from the Brahman who is the Supreme at the dawn of evolution, and, like inspiration, is withdrawn into Its fathomless Unknowable depths on the eve of dissolution.

This eternal, immutable Jñāna (knowledge) is the Word of Brahmā—or Śiva which is revealed to humanity in its language by the illumined and, therefore, unerring Seers, the Ṛṣis. The Word is the Sound, the Spiritual Sound, which is the Vehicle of the manifested Divinity, the Saṁuṇa Brahman, and hence it is that the infallible, immutable Gnosis, the Vedas, is given the same name as that which is given to the Divinity Himself—namely, Śabda-Brahman (the Sound-Brahman, or Immense Sound).

Such being Divine Revelation, the Tantra is to the human spirit what science is to its intellect. The evolution of the human intellect, and the consequent mastery of man over phenomenal nature, depend upon the pursuit of scientific method, which reveals to man the secrets of objective

the Tantras have a science, a methodology, by the pursuit of which the human spirit can enter into the secret background of objective nature, free itself from the trammels of the senses and of their objects, and soar above them until, by gradual evolution, it raises itself into that plane of consciousness which is unalloyed bliss. At length the embodied spirit (Jīva), after its long and tedious journey in eight millions of bodies from the mineral to the animal, and many thousands of births and re-births in the human vehicle, returns to That whence there is no journeying back again.

It may here be asked, "Why are there the Tantras when the Vedas exist to point out to man his several paths to Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa,¹ the fourfold aspirations of humanity?" No such question arose for the thousands of years during which the Tāntrik method of spiritual culture was, as it is still, being followed by the Hindus, be they Śāktas, Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, Sauras or Gāṇapatyas.² The five classes of Hindu worshippers must be initiated according to the Tāntrik method, which has been directed to be followed even in the Vaiṣṇavik scripture Śrīmad Bhāgavata (see Skandha XI, chap. xxvii). All the Bija Mantras,³ excepting the Praṇava (ॐ), are Tāntrik, and the greater part of the methodology is either Tāntrik or mixed—that is, Tāntrik mixed with Vaidik, pure Vaidik methods having long been, and rightly so, abandoned. Under these circumstances, the question, thus mooted, savours somewhat of scepticism and unbelief in the Hindu Dharma; at any rate, it does not lie in the mouth of a Hindu to put such a question. Be that as it may, since the question arises in these degenerate days, it is but meet that it should be answered.

The influence of time upon the constitution of man is a factor which must always be borne in mind in all considerations affecting his spiritual progress. The Hindu Śāstras hold that the ever-recurring four ages (yugas)⁴ exert a mighty influence not only upon the human race, but upon everything in the universe. Men in the first or Satya

¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

[Dharma is the performance of meritorious acts for the enjoyment of happiness in Heaven.

Artha is the acquisition of wealth and of whatever renders life happy here below.

Kāma is desire and its fulfilment.

Mokṣa is liberation or emancipation from birth and death.—B.K.M.]

² The five divisions of Hindu worshippers, worshipping as their Iṣṭadevatā, Śakti, Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun and Gaṇeśa.

³ [Root-Mantras. A particular Bija Mantra is a particular sound-expression of a particular form of the Deity, so that a Bija Mantra is not a combination of letters, but is the Divinity Itself.—B.K.M.]

Yuga had a very long life on earth; their average height was that of a giant; they were capable of undergoing very great physical and mental strain. They were truthful, honest, kind, compassionate, unavaricious, pure-hearted, and contented. Mendacity, theft, greed, lust, anger, vanity, jealousy, oppressiveness, and other faults were almost unknown to them. They were a race of sturdy, pure-minded humanity, for whom the method of spiritual culture was that promulgated in the Vedas. They had their passions under their control, which enabled them not only to undergo long Brahmacharya¹ and Tapas² in their youth, but to pass cheerfully through the most rigid ordeals incumbent upon a Vaidik neophyte. Their extraordinary physical and moral stamina enabled them to practise Dhāraṇā (concentration), Dhyāna (meditation), and Samādhi (union with the Brahman) for a great length of time. Their longevity favoured their protracted spiritual exercises according to the Vedas; and their indomitable will, unyielding fortitude, and strong physique permitted the performance of Yajñas³ extending continuously over a period of twelve years or more. It was for the guidance of men of such a constitution that the Vaidik method of spiritual self-culture existed. Men of the next Yuga (Tretā) naturally deteriorated, but were still giants compared with the pigmies of the Kali (or last and present) yuga. For them the pursuit of Vaidik methodology, though comparatively arduous, was yet still practicable. Then came the Dvāpara Yuga, when longevity declined by nine-tenths and stature by a half. Men began to fall considerably from the moral and spiritual eminence of the former two Yugas. Lust, avarice, jealousy, greed, and all other expressions of the lower human nature appeared prominently on the scene, to degrade man from his high physical and moral throne. It was then that Dharma⁴ appreciably declined owing to man's incapacity to pursue and practise Vaidik methods. The great Ṛṣis, who are ever solicitous of the weal of the human race, perceiving this inevitable decline, dived deep into the perennial ocean of eternal verities, which is the Vedas, and drew from out of them the Smṛtis⁵ as the methodology which to them seemed to be adapted to the altered circumstances of the times. The Vedas fell into the shade, and in course of time there existed very few who could really unravel their mysteries. The Purāṇas were devised partly to preserve Vaidik teaching in the form of legends and myths, and partly to present a popular exposition of the cardinal

¹ Control of the sexual propensities and over whatever ministers to them.

² Austerities. Endurance of the pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, light and darkness, happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, etc.

³ Sacrifices, etc. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ Religion. Morality. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

truths of the Sanātana Dharma (Vaidik cult) to humanity such as it then was.

It must not be thought that the method of self-culture prescribed for humanity of the Satya Yuga was irksome and arduous to them. It was on the contrary, exactly such as to suit the people of those times in view of their longevity, and of their physical and moral strength. But to the short-lived, debilitated, and morally debased men of the Kali Yuga the Vaidik methodology is a mountain-load which they have not the capacity to bear. What is deemed irksome to us was but natural to them. Let us imagine the fate of some weak Indian, were the dumb-bells with which Ram Murti, the modern Hercules, exercises, placed in his hands, and he were bidden to strengthen his muscles with them! Such an Indian must have instruments suited to his physique for his physical culture. Even so is the case with spiritual culture. How can people whose average age is about thirty or forty years devote two-thirds or more of it to Vaidik study and Vaidik practice of Karmakāṇḍa,¹ maintaining strict celibacy and undergoing great privations? They have neither the physical nor the moral strength necessary for it. And, even if it be supposed that they could do it in some fashion or other, how can they find the time sufficient to carry on the arduous duties of a Vaidik householder, then go to the jungles to prepare themselves for jñāna (knowledge), and finally, when ripe in divine wisdom, to assume the Sannyāsi's bowl?² This, indeed, is the Vaidik scheme of life. It was suited to men of that fortunate time. As it is now impracticable by the average man, it has naturally fallen into disuse. Methods of self-culture based on the immutable Vaidik truths are, from time to time, either devised by Ṛṣis, such as the innumerable Vaidik Śākhās,³ most of which are now defunct, or are promulgated by Avatāras,⁴ or revealed by the Godhead in view of the times in which men live. The Vedas stand paramount for each one and all of them. A method, therefore, which is essentially at variance with the Vaidik cardinal truths must be rejected as a man-made scheme, unworthy of acceptance.

Towards the eve of the third yuga (age) moral and spiritual degeneration overtook mankind, and it was then that the Divine Mother and the Divine Father revealed those Tantras which were suited to the constitution of the degenerate race of the men of the Kali Yuga.

The Divine Mother, the ambrosial milk of whose breast ever flows for the succour of Her children, thus addressed Her Lord:

¹ Sacrifices and other rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Vedas.

² The mendicant ascetic of the fourth or last Vaidik Āśrama. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ Branches or recensions of the Vedas.

⁴ Descents of the Brahman: when on to the physical plane, the

युगधर्मप्रभावेन स्वभावेन कलौ नराः ।
 भविष्यन्त्यतिदुर्वृत्ताः सर्वथा पापकारिणः ।
 तेषामुपायं दीनेश कृपया कथय प्रभो ॥
 आयुरारोग्यवर्चस्यं बलवीर्यविवर्धनम् ।
 विद्याबुद्धिप्रदं नृणामप्रयत्नशुभंकरम् ॥
 येन लोका भविष्यन्ति महाबलपराक्रमाः ।
 शुद्धविताः परहिता मातापित्रोः प्रियंकराः ॥
 स्वदारनिष्ठाः पुरुषाः परस्त्रीषु पराङ्मुखाः ।
 देवतारुभक्ताश्च पुत्रस्वजनपोषकाः ॥
 ब्रह्मज्ञा ब्रह्मविद्याश्च ब्रह्मचिन्तनमानसाः ।
 सिद्धयर्थं लोकयात्रायाः कथयस्व हिताय यत् ॥

Mahānirvāṇa. First Ullāsa

“Under cyclic influence men will naturally become evil-minded and will be addicted to sinful acts. O saviour of the humble! O Lord! graciously tell me the means by which men may acquire long life, health, strength, vigour, and manliness; by which they may become learned and sound-minded; by which they may get effortless welfare; by which they may become endowed with great strength and intrepidity; by which they may become pure-minded, benevolent, obedient to parents, faithful to their wives, averse to others' wives, lovers of God and of Guru, supporters of sons and relatives; by which men may become knowers of Brahman, learned in Brahmagvidyā (the transcendental science), and thinkers on Brahman. I pray Thee to tell me the means by which their welfare both here and hereafter may be secured.”

The result of this prayer is the statement by Śiva of the Tāntrik methods of self-culture and of the rules of conduct to be pursued by Sādhakas (aspirants).

Here I may state parenthetically that esoteric Tantrism is as ancient as the Vedas.

ब्रह्म क्षत्रं पवते तेज इन्द्रियं सुरया सोमः सुत असुतो मदाय ।
 शुक्रेण देव देवताः पिष्टमिह रसेनान्नं यजमानाय धेहि ॥

Śukla Yajurveda, Chap. xix

“Oh, Deva Soma! being strengthened and invigorated by Surā (wine), by thy pure spirit, please the Devas; give juicy food to the sacrificer

अर्चन्त्यै मदिस्व पीतये ।

R̥gveda

“Worshipping the sun before drinking madira (wine).”

येन स्त्रियमनुकृतं येनापामृषत् सुराम् ।

Mantra Brāhmaṇa

“By which women have been made enjoyable by men, and by which water has been transformed into wine (for the enjoyment of men),” etc.

सीतामादाय हस्तेन मधु मैरेयकं शुचि ॥

पाययामास काकुत्स्थः शचीमिव पुरन्दरः ॥

मांसानि च सुमृष्टानि फलानि विविधानि च ।

रामस्यभ्यवहारार्थं किंकरास्तूर्णमाहरन् ॥

Rāmayaṇa, Uttara Kāṇḍa (20-18-20)

“Like Indra in the case of (his wife) Śacī, Rāmacandra made Sītā drink purified honey-made wine. Servants brought for Rāmacandra meat and sweet fruits.”

उभौ मध्वासवाख्यावुभौ चन्दनरूपितौ ।

स्रग्विणौ वरवस्त्रौ तु दिव्याभरणभूषितौ ॥

नैकरत्नविचित्रन्तु काञ्चनं महदासनम् ।

विविधास्तरणास्तीर्णं यत्रासातामरिन्दमौ ॥

अर्जुनोत्संगौ पादौ केशवस्योपलक्ष्ये ।

अर्जुनस्य च कृष्णाया सत्यायां च महात्मनः ॥

Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva

“Arjuna and Śrī Kṛṣṇa drinking wine made from honey and being sweet-scented and garlanded, wearing splendid cloths and ornaments, sat on a golden throne studded with various jewels. I saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s feet on Arjuna’s lap, and Arjuna’s feet on Draupadī and Satyabhāmā’s lap.”

It is only old wine in new jars which is presented by Śiva and Bhagavatī to men of the Kali Yuga. An exoteric aspect, however, suitable for the generality of folk was added to the already extant esoteric path, which only a few are competent to pursue.

It may be contended that Īśvara Himself, having incarnated towards the end of the Dvāpara Yuga for the salvation of mankind, there was no need for the Tantras. But, in the first place, it must be understood that Īśvara, Hari, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Ādyāśakti, and Mahādeva are one and the same Supreme, only the vehicle in which the Supreme manifests Itself being

f Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The worship of the Divinity as Mother, which is the principal characteristic of the Tantras, had prevailed long before the advent of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Vraja Gopīs worshipped Kātyāyanī that they might gain Kanāi as their husband. Rukmiṇī, having paid homage to the Divine Mother, prayed: “O Kātyāyanī! O Mahamāyā! O Mahāyoginī! O Lady Paramount of all the Lords! O Devī! give me the son of Nanda-Gopa as my consort; I bow to Thee” (Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Sk. X). Besides this, I have already drawn attention to the fact that the Śrīmad Bhāgavata prescribes the Tāntrik form of worship, and that all the Paurāṇik worships abound in Tāntrik Mantras. To the mass Śrī Kṛṣṇa taught Karma Yoga by Himself, performing various Yajñas,¹ to the cultured classes He gave the transcendental philosophy of the Vedas, which is also the rock upon which the Tantras are built; and to those who, having emancipated themselves from the thralldom of the world and its conventions, to the God-loving Gopīs, He imparted the highest mystery of Divine communion, which is likewise the highest mystery of Tāntrik worship. Śrī Kṛṣṇa perpetuated the Tāntrik methods of worship and yoga. He did not set up a new method, nor did He revive the obsolete Vaidik system.

Mankind in the Kali Yuga have, by the efflux of cyclic time, dwindled into pigmies, both physically and spiritually, though, by the law of evolution, their intellectual capacity has increased. But it is not through intellect alone that Spirit can march on in its career of spiritual progress. A man, however great in intellectual accomplishments, may yet be a child so far as his spiritual nature is concerned. To cultivate the spirit, it is necessary to withdraw to a considerable extent his mind from the senses and the brain, which are the instruments of intellectual culture. The Kali Yuga dwarf finds himself a prey to the glamour of phenomena and the allurements of the senses. Not having spiritual insight, he takes the unreal for the real, the evanescent for the eternal, bondage for freedom, and identifying himself with the body and the lower mind, makes of himself, in spite of his intellectual acumen, in spite even of his Upaniṣadik, Vedāntik, and philosophic lore, a being who, so far as spirituality is concerned, is not far above the animal kingdom. Not having the strength nor the longevity to pursue the arduous Vaidik spiritual training, man would find himself in a very precarious state, and the Divine Scheme of spiritual evolution would be frustrated, had not provision suitable to the times, been made for his salvation. The Divine Mother, Ādyāśakti, in Her unbounded compassion for Her children and in concert with the Divine Father, Mahādeva, therefore, revealed the Āgamas and the Nigamas² for the salvation of humanity. These Āgamas and Nigamas are known as Tantra.

There may be souls, few and far between, who having, after ages self-culture, been born in the present Kali Yuga with a goodly stock of spiritual training, are fitted to continue their evolution according to the Vaidik methods. But the vast vessel of humanity as a mass would be rudderless to pass safely through the ocean of the world were it not for the Tantra which is revealed towards the dawn of every Kali Yuga. The Tāntrik methodology of spiritual self-culture has been followed and practised these thousands of years, and the country, from end to end, permeated with it. But it is to be deplored that, owing to English education, which has given a great impetus to intellectual culture, and has brought philosophy within the reach of all, the aspirations of many who are spiritually-minded far exceed their spiritual capacity. Aspiring thus to what they do not deserve, they become, oftener than not, disappointed and dejected.

The great merit of the Tantra is its all-comprehensiveness. Humanity in each of its phases and conditions, has been provided with a system of culture suited to the nature and capacity of each individual. The milk of compassion of Jagadambā, the Divine Mother, flows perpetually and equally to every one of Her children, that they may drink of it and acquiring thereby spiritual strength, may return to Her loving lap. She does not exact from Her weak and short-lived children of the Kali Yuga long and trying Brahmacharya¹ and austerity to show them the way to Her Lotus Feet. Enervating is the influence of the Kali Yuga, but, in inverse ratio, high is the potency of the medicament She has prescribed for Her children. The low and the high, all are equally taken care of and, for all, the path has been made smooth and straight.

The doctrine of the Tantras, whilst recognizing Sāmkhya-Patañjala is Vedāntik Advaitavāda. It reconciles duality (Dvaita) with unity (Advaita), the haven into which the wandering ego will at last find its eternal rest after it has worked out its Karma. The Advaita philosophy and the method of self-culture founded upon it, have their origin in the Vedas. It has, in modern times, been expounded by Śrīmad Śaṅkarācārya; at any rate, its interpretation by Śaṅkarācārya has obtained firm hold in many men's minds, and is regarded by them as infallible. There is another interpretation of Advaitism by Rāmānuja, which has also a large following in many parts of India. Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja are human expounders of the Vaidik law, and both are great souls of the Kali Yuga, but not Rṣis. Śaṅkara's transcendental philosophy advocates knowledge (jñāna); Rāmānuja's Vedāntism champions devotion (bhakti) as the means to salvation. But both agree in having a pessimistic standpoint. The world, they maintain, has nothing in it which may help a man's

spiritual progress. It is darkness, misery, and the arch-enemy, which, by heavy chains, binds down man. The aspirant to spiritual culture must hunt it as he would the python who might strangle him. All the faculties of the brain-mind have to be brought into requisition to combat the world, both subjective and objective, and thus to free the aspirant from the coils of the enemy. By elaborate processes of discrimination (*viveka*) the world must be negated; and renunciation of everything appertaining to it crowns the efforts of the aspirant to knowledge (*jñāna*). Even if the world were really what it is dismally painted to be, how many among all its millions can fight such a battle and emerge as the conqueror? Such a system of spiritual culture is bound to fail, and to render religion an impossibility for the mass of the people. They, no doubt, have been provided with an elementary system of religion, but the root-idea is there, and fighting nature out is the watchword everywhere. This impotent militant spirit has wrought havoc in the Hindu mind, and rendered it a slave to the very world which it has been taught to vanquish. There have, certainly, been great souls who, after a culture extending over many births and rebirths, have at last succeeded in attaining the spiritual heights. But such souls are but few among many millions. "Sarvam khalvidam Brahma" (Verily all this is Brahman) is the saying of the Veda and Vedānta. The neophyte who had been taught to hate the world as *Kākabiṣṭhā* (excrement of the crow), at length, and after ages of *Sādhana*, finds it to be nothing but Brahman. The *Kākabiṣṭhā* then reveals itself to him in all the glory of Divine effulgence.

The Tantras prescribe a very different method of self-culture. Here the Great God (*Mahā Deva*) Himself is the expounder of the Law—that is, the Divine knowledge—which He revealed at the dawn of creation in His aspect as *Brahmā*.

"The hall of sorrow," "the vale of tears," "the hall of torments," and other such names by which schools of transcendental philosophy disparage the world, have no place in the Tantra. The Tantra is the Breath of Divinity, and the world is evolved from that Breath. The Divine Mother (call Her Father or Father-Mother as you choose) is in every molecule, in every atom, in all things which constitute the world. In fact, She is the causeless Cause of whatever is; She is the manifested Brahman. The world is the playground (*Līlākṣetra*) of the All-blissful *Ānandamayī*. The world is neither an illusion nor a non-reality; nor is it under the government of the Ruler of Hell, whose autocratic tyranny drives sensible men first to raise the standard of revolt, and then, when they find no King great enough to drive the tyrant off, sends them in a stampede to the unknown and unknowable kingdom of an Abstraction, which is but a distance, absolute knowledge, and absolute bliss. But,

and battlements and fortifications of the kingdom of the supposed Arch dev are impregnable; that, as far as their imagination can extend, his empi also extends; and that their own selves—that is, their minds and whatev constitutes their individual selves—is of the same material as that wi which the alleged nefarious world is constituted. Having learnt this sa truth at last, many Sādhakas of other schools fall precipitately from th height of their hopes and aspirations. Discomfited, dejected, and cress fallen, they can neither seek the supreme object of life (Paramārtha) n reconcile themselves to the world, in which they have to live not onl during their present lives but in many lives yet to come. This disma philosophy is not merely the heirloom of Sādhakas. It has been almos indelibly impressed upon the consciousness of the ordinary run of mer with the result that the Hindus are in general pessimists and fatalists i high degree.

The Tāntrik Sādhaka, by his method of worship, is led from th outset to feel, and then by higher processes of self-culture to realize, th All-blissful Mother in the universe—nay, to regard the universe as th Mother Herself. Every man and every woman is to him the Mothe Herself; every living object is to him an object of obeisance. His thoug and conduct are made to flow in that all-loving and all-reverencing channel. Training his mind thus, the Sādhaka, far from finding th world to be a vale of tears, of sorrow, and of suffering, views it as the very Kashmir of subjective and objective beauty. Every man and woman—nay, all living things—are glowing with Divinity. This state of mind n only quenches the thirst of his lower nature, but spiritualizes its anima tendencies; not only does it buoy him up with fresh energy to pursue th Path, but he attains liberation (Mukti), eating the sweet fruit of the world, of which the Sādhakas of other schools are deprived. On the other hand, the man of the world who professes Tāntrism has every faith in the reality of the world. To him it is not an illusion nor an evil, and therefore he exerts his utmost to make it the happy lap of the Mother, which it really is.

The Tāntrik Path, as I have already said, is smooth and straight. It is fitted to the constitution of the Kali Yuga man. The method of Tāntrik self-culture has the supreme merit of accomplishing within a short time what other methods can hardly accomplish within a life. This is testified to by numberless adepts, ancient and modern. And it is for this that Paurāṇiks have largely drawn upon it. It is also said that Śaṅkarācārya's Yoga system owes much to Tāntrism. The Mahāyāna Buddhistic system is saturated with it. Nāgārjuna, the great Buddhistic Arhat, who flourished about seven hundred years ago, was a great Tāntrik yogī and alchemist, whose Bauddha-Tāntrik works are the authority of Northern Buddhism.

The Tantra is non-sectarian. It provides a basis for all religions.

aiṣṇavas, and holds that the Sādhana of the Divine, as the All-blissful Mother, is the easiest and straightest Path.

The Tantra is the only Divine Revelation which throws open the gates of arcane nature to those who have the courage to peer into it. Man, in his onward Path, must dive deep into nature's heart to discover what he, and the universe of which he is a component part, is. The method of spiritual self-culture leads him, step by step, to an acquaintance with nature's supersensuous beings, high and low, and teaches him how to utilize the services of the high, and to ward off the evil influences of the low. This knowledge is of essential importance to the sojourner on the Path; for the evil spirits throw every manner of obstacles to impede his march and encompass his ruin; whereas the good spirits would gladly help him on if he but knew how to obtain their help. Woe to the aspirer who, having made the acquaintance of the lower spirits, abandons his true end and aim and utilizes their service for unlawful worldly purposes. Such are the black magicians whose lot is miserable both here and hereafter.

Self-culture, according to the Tāntrik method, develops the Will and endows the Sādhaka with some lower powers (Siddhis) within a comparatively short time. Those who are charmed with those powers and are tempted to use them are like to share the same fate with the black magicians. The end and aim of high Tāntrik Sādhana is the realization of the Advaita Tattva—the attainment of Kaivalya Mukti;¹ and it is to this end that the true Sādhaka consecrates not only his present life, but a succession of lives extending over many ages. By intense Sādhana² he has first to free himself from the chain of Karma,³ which fastens him down to the three Lokas, Bhūh, Bhūvah, and Svah.⁴ When past this triad of the Karmik chain, his onward progress continues until he can "pierce through" the Spiritual Sun (the manifested Brahman), and merge himself with the Supreme. There must, indeed, be very few, even throughout countless periods of time, who have attained this liberation (Mukti) upon earth. But Sādhakas who devotedly and perseveringly pursue the path become Devas, Lords of Manvantaras,⁵ Lokapālas (planetary Lords), and Dikpālas (Lords of space), and the like, and rise higher and higher until their work is ended. There are others who, refusing liberation, come down from time to time as Saviours of mankind.

The investigations of the Tāntrik into the inner temple of nature reveal to him many secrets both of an objective and subjective nature,

¹ Union with the Brahman.

² Practise. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ The three worlds—Earth, the atmospheric and celestial planes.

including those of the human mechanism. It is thus that he is a theurgist and thaumaturgist, alchemist, herbalist, metallurgist, physician, astrologer and astronomer. The Tāntrik's alchemy crossed the ocean and reached Europe; his chemistry discovered ages ago many truths, some of which have dawned upon European scientists within but recent times. He was the first in the world to use mercury, snake poison, and the metals as medicine. His system of medicine has superseded that of the Āyurved. His science of Breath is still a mystery to the Europeans. Last, though not the least, there is what may be called his science of psycho-physical culture, which renders the physical body obedient to the will, and thus by certain postures not only enables him to ward off and cure diseases, but to control the mind. The Tantra, in fine, is from its very nature an encyclopædic science. It is practical, and has no concern with word-warfare. It lights the torch and shows the way, step by step, until the sojourner comes to the end of his journey, realizing the universe in, the Brahman and the Brahman in the universe. So has it been said:

अन्यान्यशास्त्रेषु विनोदमात्रं न तेषु किञ्चिद्भुवि दृष्टमस्ति ।
चिकित्सितज्यौतिषतन्त्रवादाः पदे पदे प्रत्ययमावहन्ति ॥

“All other Śāstras are merely entertaining; they can show nothing on earth. But the medical science, astrology, and Tantra prove themselves at every step.”

ŚAKTI

In the Sanskrit language the word Śakti is feminine. It must not, therefore, be supposed that that which is denoted by it is feminine. There is no word in the English language which conveys the exact meaning of the word Śakti as it is used in the Hindu Spiritual Science. It is neither force nor energy of physical science. The word Power may be used to designate it.

Power or Śakti is the root of all existence. It is from Śakti that universes are evolved; it is by Śakti that they are sustained; and it is into Śakti that they are finally resolved. It is the same as Parabrahman. Parabrahman is Existence (Sat), Consciousness (Cit), and Bliss (Ānanda). By Śakti is denoted exactly these three aspects in the One without a second. Cit is the Power, and the two other aspects go along with it; for without consciousness there would be neither existence nor happiness. Śakti, then, is essentially absolute Satcitānanda.

Within, so to say, the womb of Śakti, is Māyā or Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe which, during cosmic inaction or Mahānirvāṇa is potential.

non-reality, nor a state of equilibrium of certain things; nor is it a something-nothing, something little (yatkiñcit), an idea (bhāva). It is as immutable and permanent as the triple aspects already mentioned. It unfolds, to use chemical phraseology, a triad of Guṇas or Reals which, mutating and combining, make up the appearance of the ever-changing world, and which, in Mahāpralaya, are withdrawn within the bosom from whence they emerged. Māyā or Prakṛti it must be understood, never in association with Cit, be it in Mahāpralaya or in evolution; for there is only One without a second, and Prakṛti must be an inseparable part or power of It. Parabrahman thus has a quadruple aspect, and is symbolized in the Tantra by a grain of gram (Canaka). As a grain of gram is a bi-valvular unity,¹ enveloped by an outer skin, so is Śakti a Unity having the characteristic of a duality when viewed through the veil of Prakṛti. This duality is neither Jiva nor Ātmā, nor matter and spirit, but a polarity. From the fathomless womb of Parabrahman or Śakti is evolved the universe, and into that womb it is withdrawn when the hour of final dissolution strikes. Śakti is, therefore, both centrifugal and centripetal Power. It is male-female, and therefore expressed by the word Brahman, in the neuter gender.

The notion seems to prevail that what the Tāntriks posit by Śakti is dead matter, Prakṛti. Nothing can be farther from this unwarrantable conclusion. Śakti, as that which is potential, is much more expressive than Brahman considered as something neutral. Prakṛti, the matrix of the universe of names and forms, is the veil through which alone it is possible to approach the Sat-cit-ānanda Brahman by the human consciousness. It is the destiny of human consciousness, which is relative, to merge itself into the one true Consciousness, which is absolute, and thus to fulfil the end and aim of life. The Tantra, therefore, along with all other spiritual sciences, worships the Absolute through that in which It is manifested.

The expression "Veil of Prakṛti" is, however, not an appropriate one. It is borrowed from the Theosophical literature. Cit or Śakti is self-manifesting. But immutable, undifferentiated Prakṛti is the only ground in which it can manifest itself so as to be cognizable to the self, be it of man or of Devatā. Prakṛti, therefore, is not a "Veil," but, on the other hand, is Śakti itself in Evolution. When the first hour strikes for the commencement of the cosmic play (Jagat Līlā), Prakṛti becomes the Conscious Śakti, the Unmanifested Manifest, the First Cause, the Supreme Power, the Sun of all suns, from which universes are to evolve. It is the Kāraṇa Deha (causal body) of Cit-śakti. It is impersonal, all-pervading, immutable, and Cit itself. It is the God of all Gods; the

object of the highest form of human worship—nay, the object of the worship of all the Gods, including Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. It is symbolized in the Tantra by a Bindu or dot (.), and expressed in human language by the word “Ciṅghana”¹ (चिङ्घन).

Bindu or Śakti is neither male nor female, but partakes of the characteristics of both. In its Advaita, or non-dual nature, is a dual characteristic—a polarity, as I have already said, which may be expressed by the terms “positive” and “negative,” and which is denominated in the Tantra by Śiva and Śakti; pum (male), and strī (female); Sun and Moon; the male principle being Śiva, and the female principle being Śakti or Mahākālī. Mahākālī (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) is as much Śakti as Mahākālī, the one being the female, and the other the male aspect of the selfsame Śakti.

The Tantra is, therefore, all-comprehensive and non-sectarian. It enjoins the worship of Śakti—that without which nothing can live and move and have its being. The worship of Viṣṇu is as much a part of the worship as is the worship of Kālī, although the worship of the latter is held to be comparatively easy, and more suited to the present race of men for reasons which I shall have occasion to state later.

It must not be thought that, although Prakṛti becomes conscious of Śakti in manifestation, it is in any of its forms the ultimate object of worship. Worship, however, implies a duality. And although essentially the worshipper and the worshipped are the same—and it is the realization of this Unity which is the end and aim of worship—yet Śakti in manifestation cannot but be the object of worship so long as the Ego has its individuality which is made of the stuff of Prakṛti. It is, therefore, that in spiritual culture the Tantra postulates two Śaktis: Vācaka Śakti is manifested in Prakṛti, and Vācya Śakti is Cit itself, which is the goal to be attained. It is by the realization of Vācaka Śakti that the Vācya Śakti can be attained. The Vācya Śakti is formless, and cannot, therefore, be the object of any form of Upāsanā (worship) or yoga practice.

The manifested Śakti is the Power which is the object of adoration, prayer, and praise. So long as the human Soul remains such, it cannot go beyond. But when the Soul—that is, the causal body or Kāraṇa Śarīra—is cast off, the duality for ever disappears, and the self is merged into that which is Śakti in itself.

By whatever name it may be, whether Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Kālī, Durgā, Gaṇapati, or Sūrya, It is the manifested Śakti, the Saguna Brahman. But there are certain sects of worshippers who assign an inferior position to Śakti, and regard it as a female power only, subordinate to the God they worship. That the God they worship is Śakti as well is ignored by them. In this they take an anthropomorphic view of the Supreme, who according

to them, is male (Śaktimān), and Śakti (his Consort) is his inferior, like some conceptions of an Oriental wife. The Tantra repudiates this view, and regards both Śaktimān and Śakti as the male and female aspects of the one Śakti. Where would be Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa without Śakti (Power)? Bereft of Śakti, the Vehicle, designated as Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, and all other Vehicles from the highest God to the lowest atom, would be but a dead inert mass. It is Śakti which is life, intelligence, and consciousness. No state of existence can be superior to it. Both these aspects of Śakti are inseparable, and the one is not inferior to the other, any more than the negative pole of electricity can be considered to be subordinate to the positive. Hence it is that all the Gods are associated with Goddesses; hence it is that Rāma has his Sītā, Kṛṣṇa has his Rādhā, and Mahākālā is accompanied by Mahākālī.

It is Śakti (Power) which creates, Śakti which sustains, and Śakti which withdraws into Her fathomless womb innumerable worlds in infinite space. Indeed, She is space itself, and every being therein.

Physical science is acquainted with one of Her physical powers, and that by its abnormal manifestations only; for the nature of electric force is unknown to the scientist. Science used to distinguish force and matter as two different things; but the trend of scientific thought seems to have undergone in this respect a revolution. The theory is now put forward that matter is a modification of force. Spiritual science holds exactly a similar view, but on a very broad line of thought, and maintains that from Śakti (Power) everything emanates, first in the spiritual, then in the celestial, and then in the terrestrial Kosmogogenesis.

It is peculiar to the Universal Mother that, unlike human and animal mothers, She devours and then disgorges Her offspring. Seated in the lotus forest, which floats in the water of space, She is perpetually devouring and disgorging the Elephant (the Kosmos). When She disgorges and nourishes She is the most beautiful of the beautiful; Her beauty enchants even the Gods; She is then Bhuvaneśvarī and Bhuvanamahinī. It is the descent of Spirit into matter. When She devours Her offspring with Her thousand mighty jaws, She is Mahākālī; Her transcendental beauty is realizable only by the wise and the devotee. Westerners and Hindus demoralized by Western civilization have the profanation to call this Her aspect as ugly and terrible. Yes, She is terrible to the earth-bound soul. But to the pilgrim on the path of return—the path of Nivṛtti—the Majesty of Her beauty and the message of peace and comfort in Her right hand are ineffable. It was this stupendous Majesty which the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (who is the same as Kālī) exhibited to His dear disciple Arjuna, when the latter entreated Him to appear before him in His godly form. Arjuna had entreated Him thus: “O Yogī, how should I contemplate Thee so as to

The Lord then enumerated some of His Vibhūti (distinguishing qualities) which yet could not satisfy the disciple; for they were too abstract for contemplation and devotion. The Bhakta (devotee) must have something tangible to fix his mind upon. Therefore he exhorted the best of Puruṣas to show him his Divine Rūpa (Form). Endowing him with spiritual vision the Lord showed him the Rūpa with which he had to commune. Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary, describes this Rūpa as endowed with Knowledge (jñāna), Godly Qualities (aiśvarya), Śakti, Strength, Virility (vīrya), and Effulgence (tejas). O Sādhaka of the Vaiṣṇava school! is this Rūpa ugly and hideous? O devotee! do not be deluded by the glamour of earthly beauty; feast your spiritual eye with the Majesty of Divine grandeur and beauty.

She is Māyā, because Māyā is a part of Her nature; She is Avidyā because She binds; She is Mahāmāyā because She dominates Māyā. She is Vidyā because She holds the torch which illumines the Path of return, She is Mahāvidyā because She is the Mother in whose sweet and soothing bosom the wayworn pilgrim finds his eternal rest.

The Divine Mother is thus the cause both of bondage as well as of liberation. She is in all things, and all things are in Her. She is consciousness; She is intelligence; She is sleep; She is wakefulness; She is hunger; She is thirst; She is shadow; She is substance; She is power; She is impotence; She is mercy; She is compassion; She is bashfulness; She is peace; She is esteem; She is beauty; She is ugliness; She is prosperity; She is adversity; She is memory; She is truth; She is falsehood; She is good; She is evil; She is avarice; She is contentment; She is mother; She is error; She is rectitude; She is illusion; She is reality; She is the power of the senses; She is ignorance; She is knowledge; She is the mysterious dispenser of a double force, from one of which surges forth the universe, and the other it is which withdraws it; She is the tide and ebb, the inspiration and respiration, the diastole and systole of the universe. Both centrifugal and centripetal forces are in Her. The Human Ego has the privilege to choose either of these spiritual forces to work out its destiny: by the one it is thrown into the eddy of Pravṛtti (desire), to be whirled round and round until the great dissolution (Mahāpralaya); the other girds it up with that power and energy which will enable it to strike through the eddy and reach the serene centre of the Mother's bosom.

The three aspects of Śakti, which constitute the Trinity of the Hindus, are Volition (icchāśakti), Administration (kryāśakti), and Cognition (jñānaśakti). These are the three Powers which direct the evolution, the sustentation, and the involution of the Universe. The Nirvāṇa Tantra says: "In the region of Truth, the Formless and Resplendent Pervader of the universe, casting off the covering of Māyā, became divided into two

first of all was born the son named Brahmā. Said Kālikā: Hear me, O son! O Hero! take care to marry. Hearing this, Brahmā then said: There is no Mother other than Thee; O beautiful One, give me a Śakti (wife). Hearing this, the Mother of the universe, from Her own body, gave him a charming wife, who is the second Mahāvidyā, the great Power named Sāvitrī. Associate thyself with Her, and publish the Veda (Divine Knowledge), and become the Creator of the universe with ease. The second son born was Viṣṇu vehicled by Sattva guṇa. Said Kālikā: Hear me, O Son! O Hero! take care to marry. Said Viṣṇu: Thy sight renders man passionless. O Mother, O Consort of Śiva! How can I marry unless Thou givest me a fair maiden for wife? The Mother, from Her own body, gave him a wife. O Goddess! She is the Vaiṣṇavī Mahāvidyā, Śrīvidyā. With her help Viṣṇu sustains the universe. The third son begotten was the great Yogī Sadāśiva. Seeing him Mahākālī beamed with joy. O Son, great Yogī! give heed to what I say. Who is there a male like thee, and who is there a female like me? Therefore, O Śiva! forthwith marry me. Sadāśiva said: O Mother! Thou hast verily said the truth; there is none who charms like Thee. There is no Puruṣa like myself. But I cannot marry Thee in Thy present body. If Thou art kind to me, change Thy body. Instantaneously Mahākālī gave him Bhuvaneśvarī."

The Kubjika Tantra says: "Brahmāṇī creates, surely not Brahmā, therefore Brahmā is but a Preta,"¹ and so on with regard to Viṣṇu and Śiva. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are quite powerless to discharge their respective functions without Śakti or Power.

The Devībhāgavata (Skandha III. Cha. vi) relates that Brahmā having asked Ādyāśakti as to whether She was male or female, the Divine Mother thus explained Herself:

सदैकत्वं न भेदोऽस्ति सर्वदैव ममास्य च ।
 योऽसौ साहमहं योऽसौ भेदोऽस्ति मतिविभ्रमात् ॥
 आवयोरन्तरं सूक्ष्मं यो वेद मतिमान् हि सः ।
 विमुक्तः स तु संसारान्मुच्यते नात्र संशयः ॥
 एकमेवाद्वितीयं वै ब्रह्म नित्यं सनातनम् ।
 द्वैतभावं पुनर्याति काल उत्पित्सुसंज्ञके ॥
 यथा दीपस्तथोपाधेयोंगात् संजायते द्विधा ।
 छायेवाददर्शमध्ये वा प्रतिबिम्बं तथावयोः ॥

¹ Literally a disembodied spirit before the performance of the obsequial rites. Here used in the sense of an inert corpse, for He can do nothing

भेद उत्पत्तिकाले वै सर्गार्थं प्रभवत्सज ।
 दृश्यादृश्यविभेदोऽयं द्वैविध्ये सति सर्वथा ॥
 नाहं स्त्री न पुमांश्चाहं न स्त्रीवं सर्वसंक्षये ।
 सर्गे सति विभेदः स्यात् कल्पितोऽयं धिया पुनः ॥

“That Male (Puruṣa) and Myself are ever the same. There is no difference between Him and Me. The Puruṣa is what I am; I am what the Puruṣa is. Difference arises only from ignorance. He who is intelligent and is free from the bondage of the world can know our subtle difference; there is no doubt about this. The one without a second perennial Brahman becomes dual at the time of creation. As a single lamp becomes dual by difference of Upādhi (condition), as a single face becomes dual in the form of an image in a mirror, as a single body appears in dual form with its shadow, even so our images are many owing to the difference of minds (which are made up of Māyā). O Aja (unborn) for the purpose of creation the difference arises at the time of creation. It is only the difference between the seen and the unseen. At the time of final dissolution I am neither male nor female nor neuter. The difference (male and female) is imagined only at the time of creation.”

To form a concept of the Godhead one worships, the idea of Śakti or Power is for the devotee a surer guide than the nebulous idea of Ātmā (spirit). It is very hard for those who have no faith in Śakti to trace the “one without a second” through the physical to the spiritual plane of existence, there being no appreciable link to chain the planes together. But a worshipper of Śakti need contend with no such difficulty. In all the planes of existence he finds the one power all-pervading. It is therefore laid down in the Tantras:

शक्तिज्ञानं विना देवि मुक्तिः हास्याय कल्पते ।

“O Devi! without a knowledge of Śakti, Mukti (liberation) is mere mockery.”¹

THE SOUNDLESS SOUND

The second bell of cosmic evolution tolls. A flutter, a vibration thrills the triple Guṇas in the womb of Śakti. Rajas, the active guṇa, after its long Pralaya slumber,² receives an impulse towards awaking. Immediately as its eyes open a bifurcation takes place in Śakti, resulting in what all religions designate the Verbum, the Śabdabrahman—the

¹ That is, without such knowledge liberation cannot be attained.

immense, all-pervasive, all-comprehensive, unbroken, undifferentiated Sound Spiritual. One aspect of Śabdabrahman is Nāda, and another aspect is Bindu. As Nāda She is the Mother, and as Bindu He is the Father, of the universe. They are an inseparable twain, ever in association in cosmic evolution. Śabdabrahman is the God, the Lord, the Mother, the Word, the object of worship of all sentient beings.

The first manifestation of Śakti in the Spiritual plane is "Sound," which is undifferentiated intelligent Ākāśa,¹ the Cidākāśa² of philosophy, the Saguṇa Brahman of religion.

This Sound, the causeless cause of manifold universes, must not be confused with the sound with which we are familiar, and which we have been taught to regard as the result of vibrations in molecules of matter. It is not the Kāryākāśa or atomic Ākāśa of philosophy, which is integrated and limited and evolved from Tāmasik Ahaṅkāra.³ Nor is it a quality of such Ākāśa. It is Cit Śakti vehicled by undifferentiated Prakṛti—the manifested Godhead, uncreate, unborn, and eternal. Śabdabrahman is consciousness and intelligence, both cosmic and individual. It is the dual Śakti in unity, inseparately associated, though functioning in different ways.

Duality in unity is the root principle of the Tantra. This duality may, for want of a better expression, be called a "polarity". The Vaiṣṇavas have adopted this idea in their Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, Hari and Lakṣmī. The Hindu Śāstras hold that the universe has been evolved from the One—"without a second"—Cause, and that that Cause is both immanent and transcendent. The microcosm is in miniature what the macrocosm is. Evolution proceeds from the subtle to the gross. We find in the great physical force a duality of poles, which when brought in mutual contact produces a magnetic current. In the realms of atoms and molecules the same force has the aspects of attraction and repulsion which make the existence of material objects possible. In living mechanisms the heart and the lungs are worked by a dual force which draws in and throws off blood and air, which render organized life possible. The fluid space of the earth is dominated by a similar dual force, which rhythmically causes both ebb and tide. We thus find that what little we know of force on the physical plane gives countenance to the theory of duality in unity.

But the most extraordinary fact is the duality of all organized structures. Take, for instance, the structure of man. It is a duplex

¹ "Ether," the quality of which is sound, but, as hereafter explained, not the ether of the elements (mahābhūta).

² Literally, "ether consciousness," which is explained, *post*.

³ Ahaṅkāra or egoity is threefold, according as one or other of the guṇas of Prakṛti predominate in it. Tāmasika Ahaṅkāra is therefore that form of this

structure. "Man is not formed," to quote the learned author of "The Mechanism of Man," "as one whole, but of two distinct halves joined together. He has two sets of bones, muscles and nerves, and two brains. True there is but one liver, stomach, and intestine. This at first sight seems to be in conflict with the theory. But further examination shows the internal structure to be substantially the same as the external frame, the only difference being that the position is reversed, and instead of the point of junction being side by side, as with the framework of bone and its appendant muscles, it is, from the necessity of its position within the body, and the requirement of but one heart, one liver, etc., only a junction of two halves before and behind. Tracing these internal parts from their point of union with the external frame at the neck, it will be seen at once that one-half of the whole springs from one side of the body, and the other half from the other side, and that they unite at a central line throughout, precisely as the two halves of the external frame are united. . . . Looking beyond the human body, it will be seen that all organized beings are built after the same fashion. It will be found, on close inspection, that all other animals are so made. So likewise are all vegetables. Every leaf is duplex; so is every part of a flower. All organized beings are, in truth, formed of two halves joined together at a central line. Nothing organized is structured as *one whole*." ¹

This duality in unity in all organized structures is, as is pointed out by the learned author above quoted, due to the fact that two parents are required for the production of every organized being, and that each parent contributes a germ, by the junction of which the duplex structure is formed. The human mind, also, has a dual nature—it is swayed as much by sentiments as by reason. Taking all these facts into consideration, it will not be wrong to infer that the Cause from which these effects are produced is a dual unity. The Tantra, however, postulates this as a fact, and builds up its Science upon it.

The Nāda aspect of Śabdabrahman is Kula-kunḍalinī. Kula means the female organ of generation (*yoni*). In the Bhagavadgītā (xiv. 3), Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as the male power, says:

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहं ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥

"My womb is the great Eternal; in that I place the seed; thence cometh the birth of all beings, O Bhārata.

According to the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Kula means Jīva, Prakṛti, Dik, Kāla, and the five mahābhūtas (sensibles) taken together. Now, all

these taken together constitute the intelligent and material cause of the universe, which is the same as Yoni. As Kuṇḍala means the Coil (of the serpent), Kulakuṇḍalinī means the Spiritual Power (the cosmic Mother) who Creates the universe of names and forms and coils up round it. She is Cit or consciousness vehicled by Prakṛti. She is Sound, because the first manifestation of Prakṛti is sound, which is withal Jñāna (knowledge) and Light Spiritual. She is the One Breath, One Life. She is universal Consciousness, all-pervading, not limited by time and space. She clothes herself with Prakṛti when the hour for creation arrives. Essentially She is not different from the male aspect of Śabdabrahman, as both the aspects are indissolubly associated. She is the Parāprakṛti or Supreme Power of Brahman. From Her is sprung the universe, from Mahat¹ to the atom, and the universe is under Her control. She is Ādyā—the First Cause; She is all knowledge; and Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva have their being in Her. She knows the universe, but none know Her. She is the embodiment of all Power; She is subtle; She is gross; She is manifested; She is unmanifested; She is formless, and yet with form.

From the Sound Spiritual proceed two lines of Evolution. The first line is by Saḍriśa pariṇāma—that is, the resolution of like to like—and consists of three female Powers and their male Counterparts in the following order:

Raudrī—Rudra —fire —Tamas—Power of Cognition.

(f) (m)

Jyeṣṭhā—Brahmā —Moon—Rajas —Power of Volition.

(f) (m)

Vāmā —Viṣṇu —Sun —Sattva —Power of Causation (action).

(f) (m)

These three male and female Powers are the first triplication of the One Śabdabrahman, possessing within itself the three Powers of Volition, Causation, and Cognition; the three guṇas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas; and Its duplex Constitution. This line of creation is called Sound Creation (Śabdasṛṣṭi).

The second line of evolution is called Form-creation (Arthasṛṣṭi). It is subdivided into two. The first subdivision embraces the Lords, and the second the Tattvas.² These are the Lords of our universe, having Paraśiva as their Overlord. There are seven cosmic centres (Lokas) of Power, over each one of which each of these Lords presides in association with an aspect of Kulakuṇḍalinī as His guiding Power. The centres and the Lords are thus stated:

¹ The Tattva also called Buddhi.

<i>Loka</i>	<i>Male Power</i>	<i>Female Power</i>
Satyam	Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu	Ādyāśakti Mahākālī
Tapah	Śambhu	Siddhakālī
Janah	Śadāśiva (called Ardhanārīśvara)	Mahāgaury
Mahah	Īśa	Bhuvaneśvari
Svah	Rudra	Bhadrakālī
Bhuvah	Viṣṇu	Rādhā
Bhūh	Brahmā	Sāvitṛī

These seven centres are also seven planes of consciousness. Philosophy generalizes these seven planes of consciousness into three—*viz.*, Jāgrat (waking), Svapna (dreaming), and Suṣupti (slumbering, or dreamless sleep). The cosmic Virāt-body is waking, Hiranyagarbha-body is dreaming, and the Īśvara-body is slumbering consciousness. The Virāt-body is evolved from the last three centres, the Hiranyagarbha-body from the three centres above it, and the Īśvara-body from the highest centre. The consciousness of Viṣṇu is higher than that of Brahmā, the consciousness of Rudra is higher than that of Viṣṇu, and the consciousness of Īśvara is higher than that of the three; and so on until we come to Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu, whose consciousness is the highest form of relative consciousness.

The second subdivision begins with Mahat Tattva, and ends in the five Bhūtas, which, being familiar to every student of Hindu philosophy, need not be detailed here.

Kulakuṇḍalinī is the vital Power of the universe. Her vehicle is the Hamsa of philosophy and religion. By Hamsa is to be understood the vital force, dual in its character, borne upon which She creates the universe.

In the human body Kulakuṇḍalinī is said to reside in the root-centre (Mulādhāra cakra) of force evolution inside a coiling nerve (Nāḍī). She coils round Svayambhu the male aspect of Śabdabrahman, and covers his mouth with Her hood. Though sound is perpetually emanating from Her body, She is said to be slumbering. What Her slumber in the human body means is explained later on. I shall now deal with the sound emanating from Her body, and its nature and function.

Hamsa is the name given to the root-sound emanating from the Prāṇik Vehicle of the Divine Mother. From Hamsa emanate forms, and from forms evolve universes, and all that appertains to them. This Prāṇik Vehicle is a duality of male and female principles, the function of the male principle being to throw out and that of the female principle to draw in, or, in other words, they are centrifugal and centripetal respectively. In the human body and in the body of every living being the Prāṇik principle or Vital Power expresses itself in...

From the involuntary expiration of breath in the human body arises an audible sound, called Ajapā Mantra, which every man recites unawares. Cosmically this Ajapā is the centrifugal and centripetal energy, the attraction and repulsion of forces, observed everywhere; spiritually these two mighty aspects of the same Śakti are Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti, and so is said:

सा विद्या परमा मुक्तेर्हेतुभूता सनातनी ।

संसारबन्धहेतुश्च सैव सर्वेश्वरी तथा ॥

“That Lady paramount of all the Lords as the great Vidyā is the cause of liberation; and as (Avidyā) She too is the cause of bondage.”—Caṇḍī.

The Vital Power is called Nāda, Jīva, Prāṇa, Ghoṣa, and by other names. The Vital Sheath of the Divine Serpent undergoes differentiations. From the first differentiation arise the Seeds of the universe. When the second differentiation takes place, the root-sound Hamsa, Sound and Form, and all other dualities, come into being. In its triple state the three Guṇas, three Vedas, three articulate sounds (Varṇas), three nerves (Nāḍis), and other triads, are projected. In its quadruple form four Varṇas (sounds) and the quaternaries are evolved. In this wise various Sounds and Forms are produced, until in the fiftieth differentiation the fifty articulate Sounds, called Varṇas, or letters of the alphabet, are manifested in the Divine Vehicle of the cosmic Mother. It is therefore said that the Divine Mother sings the symphony of the universe, the beginning of which is creation, and the conclusion is dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

In the human mechanism the Mulādhāra Cakra is, as already said, the seat of Mother Kulakuṇḍalinī, where She with the fifty Varṇas as the strings of Her Divine harp forever chants Her Celestial Song. Blessed be the Soul who has listened to this Divine Nāda, and thereby liberated itself from the trammels of Māyā.

The fifty Varṇas are fifty sounds of the Sanskrit language, or rather of the primitive language of which Sanskrit is the modification. These articulate sounds have been represented in different languages by different symbols; and, according to the divergent conformations of the vocal organs of different races inhabiting different zones of the earth, they are pronounced differently. For instance, the first sound of the vowels is symbolized by अ in Sanskrit, *a* in English, *α* in Greek, *l* in Arabic, and so on. It is pronounced *aw* in Sanskrit and derived languages in India, *u* in English, *Alpha* in Greek, *Aliph* in Arabic, and so on.

These sounds are very subtle things, effulgent and chromatic. They are living energies, which human thought prompts to expression through the vocal organ. When the seat of Sound—that is, the vehicle of Mother

sound is called dhvani. Dhvani penetrated by the inert principle (Tama) is called Nāda. Nāda becomes Nibodhika by a further impression of Tama, and by successive impressions of the same quality it passes through successive stages of Ardhendu and Bindu, until at last it translates itself into the Mūlādhāra Cakra into what is known as the Para state of sound.

When the sound reaches the Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra, it is called Paśyanti. It is then propelled to the heart-cakra, where it makes a more distinct vibration, which is audible to the Yogī during his first stage of concentration, when his mind for the time being is withdrawn within itself. This is called the Madhyama state of sound. It is what is known as Nāda Anāhata Śabda of Mother Kuṇḍalinī. It is stated in Śāradātilaka, a Tāntrik work of high authority, that the first sound heard by a Yogī is like the humming of bees; the next sound he hears is like that of air passing through a hollow bamboo; then is heard a bell-like sound; and so on. When a Yogī becomes accustomed to the hearing of sound, his inner consciousness awakens and he begins to acquire knowledge, which dispels the dark illusion of the world. From the heart-lotus the sound is propelled upwards, and, coming into contact with the eight organs of speech, it issues from the mouth and becomes audible.

The fifty primary sounds which constitute the vehicle of Mother Kuṇḍalinī are called Varnas, because they are coloured. They are of various colours: some red, some white, some blue; some are the colour of melted gold, and others of coral, and some are like electric light or other colours and hues. They are called Akṣaras because, forming as they do the body of the universal Mother, they are imperishable. They are called Mātrkā, because from them the whole universe of forms, visible and invisible, terrestrial and celestial, has sprung into being.

That molecular vibrations or sounds with which we are familiar produce forms on sandy or some such surface over which sound-vibration can act without friction, is known to scientific musicians. A particular tune produces a particular form. A tune being a compound of primary sounds, it stands to reason that primary sounds have forms as well. If each of the seven tones of the gamut did not possess a form of its own, it would be quite impossible for a tune, which is a compound of primary tones, to express itself in a form. It has been found by experiment that each tune has a peculiar figure or form of its own. It may therefore safely be said that each musical form or figure is the molecular expression of a tune, which is a compound of primary sounds. If this state of things is found to be the order of nature in the world of molecules, it is but reasonable to suppose that the same law should prevail at the primordial source whence worlds are evolved. The Tantra says that the Kosmos is evolved out of the fifty Mātrkā sounds. The meaning of this, in the light of the

f evolution, undergo various permutations, thereby giving rise to subtle figures, which form the ground-work upon which, with the accumulation of atoms and molecules, bodies of diverse density and shape are formed. The gross human figure of bones, muscles, and flesh has for its groundwork a network of fine nerves. Behind this nerve-structure is the subtle body, or Sūkṣma Śarīra. Farther in there is the Kāraṇa Śarīra or causal body, the fifty-stringed lute (Viṇā) of Kuṇḍalinī Herself, upon which She plays the Divine Song of the universe until its dissolution (Mahāpralaya).

When in the course of evolution rational man appeared, it was necessary to impart to him knowledge for the perpetuation of the human race as well as for his liberation. It was to this end that the Self-existent Manu came down and gave him language. And what is that Language? It is not an arbitrary invention of words to signify objects. The Divine Manu, knowing the sound-forms of objects, gave man those forms and taught him the relation between those forms and the objects they connote. These sound-forms are words, and the objects they connote are the meanings of those words. The sound-forms or subtle bodies of universal objects being imperishable, words are imperishable. Gross bodies are evanescent, but the subtle body or Sūkṣma Śarīra persists till final dissolution of the universe, and the Kāraṇa Śarīra, or causal body, is said to be eternal. The language which Manu taught was the primeval language of root-words, remnants of which are to be found in the Vaidik Mantras. Sanskrit is derived directly from it. The innumerable languages of the world are its corruptions, or rather adaptations, in consonance with man's environments in different parts of the earth, and the consequent divergent configurations of his vocal organs. In every language there are root-words which are identical. There could, in fact, be no language without such root words as their basis. True it is that man has invented arbitrary words, and given them conventional meanings, but they are mere accretions to the original language. One may hear of words being coined (often-times from the primitive root-words), but who has ever heard of language being invented? If none have so heard, then scoffing at what the Tantras reveal as the origin of language is unjustified. It may, in any case, be accepted as a workable theory which will help materially—nay, powerfully—in aspiration for spiritual development. This aspect of the question I shall touch on later when dealing with Mantra.

The Bhagavadgītā is regarded universally as the highest embodiment of spiritual truths. In it (chap. viii, verse 13) we find:

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुसरन् ।

purposes. In the Bengali language, especially in the form in which it is used in Assam, there are numbers of Mantras which are apparently quite meaningless; many of the words used therein are no words at all, for they convey no meaning. Words and sentences which have no meanings convey to the understanding are no part of a language. If you believe that they are efficacious, you must admit that they are sound-powers acting on different planes of consciousness.

The efficacy of Mantras is not a matter of opinion, a mere theory which needs cogent arguments to bring it home to men's minds. It is a fact in the arcana of nature revealed by God, testified to by the unimpeachable evidence of selfless, disinterested R̥ṣis of hoary antiquity, and corroborated by hosts of Sādhakas¹ of all ages. There are numberless Sādhakas still living who have had direct proof of the efficacy of Mantras. Each one of us can, if we will, obtain such direct proof ourselves. The Tantra which is known as the Mantra-śāstra is an exact science, and does not shrink from the severest test which may be applied to it. Use a Mantra under the directions of a competent Guru, and you will acquire direct evidence of its efficaciousness. Our hereditary professional Gurus initiate us with sacred Bijamantra² and Gāyatrī,³ and teach us Mantras for the worshipping of our Iṣṭadevatā.⁴ We go on, as we have been taught, from the day of our initiation to the end of our life, but it may be that no result is perceived. If we ask our Guru how this is so, he will reproach us with impatience and want of devotion. Placed in this predicament we lose our faith in Mantras, and become indifferent to them. But we do not pause to reflect whether it be the fault of the Mantra, or of the instructor from whom we had the misfortune to receive it, or of ourselves. It is quite an error to suppose that if Mantra be a sound power, it must yield the result sought for as soon as it is pronounced. Now, electricity is a physical force which has been imprisoned, so to say, in various sorts of mechanical contrivances in order to produce various results. There are books which describe these contrivances and prescribe their uses. Can anyone, by mere reading of the books, handle these machineries and produce the desired results? If such be the case in dealing with physical forces, how much more is practical instruction necessary for the handling of spiritual and psychical forces.

For the moment I leave out all other Mantras in order to confine my attention to such alone as are known as Bija Mantras. They are the

¹ In a general sense worshippers. See as to Sādhana, or practice, *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² Seed-Mantras. See *ante*.

³ The celebrated Vaidik M.

powers which carry us safe through the world's entanglements towards that haven of peace and bliss for which the human mind naturally, though unconsciously, yearns, though in ignorance of the path it diverges into different treacherous ways, lured by the tempting light of Kāma desire.

From what has been said regarding Varnas, it will have been seen that Varnas are living, conscious sound-powers. From Varnas are evolved secondary sound-powers, called Mantras. It has also been related how Śabdabrahman becomes a septenary of male and female Powers for the purposes of creation. Innumerable other Powers are evolved from them, who constitute the hierarchy of Devatās. The Powers, higher or lower, are spiritual entities, possessing body and mind, though the body of the higher Gods, such as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, is to the human consciousness as unfathomable as the human body and mind is to a cell inhabiting the human body. The embodied higher Devatās are Lords of Mercy. They also manifest themselves from time to time in the Deva Loka (the region of Devas), and on earth for the good of Devas and of humanity. They create their Avatāra-body when they find it necessary to manifest themselves. The bodies of Devatās are sound-powers. In the fourth chapter of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said:

उपासकानां कार्यार्थं श्रेयसे जगतामपि ।

दानवानां विनाशाय धत्से नानाविधास्तनूः ॥

चतुर्भुजा त्वं द्विभुजा षड्भुजाष्टभुजा तथा ।

त्वमेव विश्वरक्षार्थं नानाशस्त्रास्त्रधारिणी ॥

तत्तद्रूपविभेदेन यन्त्रमन्त्रादिसाधनम् ।

कथितं सर्वतन्त्रेषु

(चतुर्थोल्लासः, ४-१६-१८)

“For the benefit of worshippers, for the good of the universe, and for the destruction of Dānavas,¹ Thou assumest various bodies. Thou art four-handed, two-handed, six-handed, and eight-handed. For the safety of the universe Thou bearest divers weapons. In the Tantras are revealed Yantras, Mantras, and other methods of self-culture, according to those bodies.”

Again, in the fifth chapter of the same Tantra it is stated:

तव रूपाण्यनन्तानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ।

नानाप्रयाससाध्यानि वर्णितुं केन शक्यते ॥

तव कारुण्यलेशेन कुलतन्त्रागमादिषु ।

तेषामर्चासाधनानि कथितानि यथामति ॥

तव मन्त्राद्यसंख्याताः कोटिकोट्यर्बुदास्तथा ।

येषु येषु च तन्त्रेषु ये ये मन्त्राः प्रकीर्तिताः ।

ते सर्वे तव मन्त्राः स्युस्त्वमाद्या प्रकृतिर्यतः ॥

(पञ्चमोऽङ्कः, २, ३; १८, १९)

“Thy manifestations are infinite, having diverse colours and forms. Different are the methods which must be diligently followed in order to realize them. None can describe them all. A little of Thy favour has enabled me to describe, according to My power, the methods of their worship and attainment in the Tantras.”

“Thy Mantras are infinite, by crores and arbuds¹ . . . Because thou art the Ādyā Prakṛti, therefore all the Mantras mentioned in the Tantras are Thy Mantras.”

From the above it will appear that Mantras are the bodies of the Devatās. They are not gross (sthūla) bodies, but subtle vehicles through which they manifest themselves. In the Yāmalatantra this is more explicitly stated:

देवतायाः शरीरं तु बीजादुत्पद्यते ध्रुवम् ।

“Verily the body of the Devatā arises from Bija.”

The Śāktānandatarāṅgiṇī, a Tāntrik work of great reputation by the renowned Brahmānanda Giri, explains the word बीजात् (vījāt) to mean वर्णात् (varṇāt). And वर्ण (varṇa) means sound-power, as already explained.

If one reads between the lines, divesting his mind of the Illusion Theory of Śrīmat Śāṅkarācārya, he may find a corroboration of the principle above laid down in the following couplet from the fourth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā:

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वमधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

“Unborn, immutable, Lord of all beings though I am, entering my Prakṛti, I am born by my own Māyā.”

Here the Lord Īśvara, and not Parabrahman, explains to his disciple Arjuna how He incarnates—that is, appears in human body. His birth

not like the birth of men; it is divyam (Divine) (*vide* Śloka, ix, chap. iv). The sūkṣma śarīra (subtle body) of man, after having spent its subjective karma, is impelled, by its own inexorable destiny, to take birth on earth through an earthly father and mother, who supply the materials for the building up of the physical body. The Lord has no such Sūkṣma Śarīra which may serve as the instrument by which a Sthūla body functions; or it must be borne in mind that without Prāṇa (the vital principle) an antahkaraṇa (the mind and the sensorium) a physical body cannot for a moment live. The Lord enters his Prakṛti, or rather brings it into requisition to form a Sūkṣma Śarīra for Himself. Now, what is the Prakṛti of Īśvara but Mūla Prakṛti in action? Is it not for exactly that reason that Īśvara is called Śabdabrahman? It is therefore spiritual sound by which Īśvara (that is Śabdabrahman) forms his subtle body of life, and sensorium. Herein lies the Divine character of Īśvara's appearances (Avatāra). It is therefore called Divine (divyam). The subsequent process of acquiring a gross body is described in the above verse to be Ātmamāyayā (by My own Māyā). Now, if Māyā and Prakṛti be one and the same, the verse becomes meaningless. Māyā or Avidyā is that phase of Prakṛti in which evolution from spirit to matter takes place, as distinguished from Mahāmāyā or Vidyā, which is the agent for the involution of matter to spirit. The Lord, to appear in flesh and blood, had therefore first to build his Sound-body, and then to issue from the Mother's womb in the ordinary way. It is this Sound-body of the Lord which is the Mantra of the Vaiṣṇavas worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Mantra is not merely an important, but an essential, element of self-culture in Kṛyā Yoga. The realization of Ātmā, the One True Self, is not possible so long as the mind functions in the brain and identifies itself with the sensations, perceptions, and concepts furnished by the phenomenal world. By Samādhi (communion) alone the true self can be realized. Kṛyā Yoga prepares the mind for Samādhi. In Patañjali's Darśana (Yoga Philosophy) Kṛyā Yoga is thus defined:

तपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः ।

This aphorism is explained by Vedavyāsa in his Commentary thus:

नातपस्विनो योगः सिद्ध्यति, अनादिकर्मक्लेशवासना चित्रा प्रत्युपस्थितविषय-
जाला चाशुद्धिर्नान्तरेण तपः संभेदमापद्यत इति तपस उपादानम्, तच्च चित्त-
प्रसादनमबाधमानमनेनासेव्यमिति मन्यते । स्वाध्यायः प्रणवादिपवित्राणां जपः, मोक्ष-
शास्त्राध्ययनं वा । ईश्वरप्रणिधानं सर्वक्रियाणां परमगुरावर्पणं, तत्फलसंन्यासो वा ।

“Discipline (of body, speech, and mind), repetition of Mantras, study of Mokṣa Śāstras (scriptures teaching liberation), and worship God, constitute Kṛyā Yoga.”

“Yoga is not attainable by persons who have not brought their body, speech, and mind under discipline. The mind being coloured with the accumulated Samskāras or impressions of Karma without beginning and with desires resulting in misery, its Rājasik and Tāmasik functions cannot be minimized without Tapas.¹ Mind-cleansing Tapasyā should be practised that it may not injure the body. The word Svādhiyāya means repeating (japa) of Praṇava (ॐ—Om) and other Mantras, or the study of such Śāstras as inculcate Mokṣa (liberation). Īśvara-praṇidhāna means the dedication of all works to the greatest Guru Īśvara (The Lord), or doing unselfish works.”

Japa² of mantra is thus an important factor in arriving at that stage of the mind which, in Yoga Śāstra, is called Samprajñāta Samādhi—this is, conscious communion. When man reaches that plane of consciousness his accumulated Karma, and his earth-bound desire which is the cause of Karma, vanish never to return again. He realizes the all-blissful Divinity and becomes Divinity itself. Divine worship is ordained as a preliminary step for this consummation; for it is by Bhakti and Prema (Faith and Love) to God that our congenital tenacious attachment to worldly things can be replaced, and the thirst for happiness of the ever-restless mind quenched. The daily worship which the Hindus perform consists of Sandhyā and Pūjā,³ in both of which Mantra is a necessity; for the Mantra is not only potent in withdrawing the mind from its external functions, but it makes worship possible. From Mantra the worshipper gains the form of the object of his worship upon which he must practise his concentration and devotion, and when the worshipper has made some advance he will recognize the Mantra itself to be his Iṣṭadevatā. Last, though not the least, is the power of Mantra to awaken the latent powers of the mind. The last chapter of Patañjali's Darśana opens thus:

जन्मौषधिमन्त्रतपःसमाधिजाः सिद्धयः ।

“Uncommon power of the mind is attained by birth, drugs, Mantra, Tapas, and Samādhi.”

The practice of Mantra according to the Tāntrik method develops without fail the latent faculties of the mind, with the help of which the

¹ Devotion, austerity, etc. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, and also for the meaning of the gunas, rajas, tamas, sattva.

² “Recitation” or “repetition” are the nearest English equivalents for this term, which is more fully explained in *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

Sādhaka must climb step after step until the final rung of the ladder is reached.

The object to be attained, or rather the one Immutable True Existence to be realized, according to the Tāntrik philosophy, is Parabrahman. But the instrument—the mind—with which man has to realize is Prākṛtik—that is, evolved out of the three guṇas of Prakṛti. The guṇas, being dissimilar in nature to Sat, Cit, and Ānanda,¹ cannot be the instrument which can directly seize the Absolute, just as one cannot catch air by iron tongs. Hence it is that the Son of God is the Mediator of the Christians, and Śabdabrahman or Saṁyama Īśvara² is the object of worship of the Hindus. The Mantra, I mean Bija Mantra is Śabdabrahman. The Mantra power of Śakti has two aspects—Vācaka and Vācya, which are explained in the text.³

The Vācaka Śakti of a Mantra is the vital, intelligent, and conscious entity through which the unconditioned evolves, or through which Nirguṇa (attributeless) Brahman must be realized. Vācaka Śakti in its female aspect is Kuṇḍalinī, and its male aspect Paraśiva or Mahāviṣṇu. Vācya Śakti is that which is sought to be realized through the Vācaka Śakti. It is Nirguṇa Brahman. The Mantra, by its innate power, reveals the Vācaka Śakti to the human mind which, being thus freed from the chain of causation, is translated into the Vācaka Śakti itself. The realization of the Vācya Śakti is the last leap forward into that region of the Absolute whence no traveller ever returns either as Īśvara or Deva or Mānava (man). The Tāntrik Sādhaka is therefore warned against that ignorance which takes Mantras to be mere words or letters of the alphabet:

गुरौ मानुषबुद्धिं च मन्त्रे चाक्षरभावनाम् ।

प्रतिमायां शिलाज्ञानं कुर्वाणो नरकं व्रजेत् ॥

“Perdition is the lot of him who thinks that Guru is a mere man, that Mantras are mere letters of the alphabet, and that Pratimā (the Image) of the Deity, is mere stone.”

The word Mantra is thus explained in the Pingalā Tantra, quoted in Śāradātilaka:

मननं विश्वविज्ञानं त्राणं संसारबन्धनात् ।

यतः करोति संसिद्धौ मन्त्र इत्युच्यते बुधैः ॥

“That from which the true knowledge of the universe and freedom from the bondage of the world is attained is called Mantra.”

¹ Existence, consciousness, and bliss, the nature of the Brahman.

² Identified with the attributeless supreme—

The "true knowledge" of the universe, according to Tantra, is the realization of the identity of Brahman and Brahmāṇḍa. This, too, is the Vaidik conception, as it is expressed in the aphorism: सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म ("Verily all this is Brahman"). I have elsewhere quoted from the Bhagavadgītā a passage in which it is said that the Mantra ओं (Om) is capable of freeing the Jīva, or embodied spirit, from the bondage of births and deaths. How mighty is the power of Mantra! It is Sound-spiritual, it is Divinity itself. Blessed is the man who, having heard the sweet, soul-soothing, ineffable Madhyama sound in the lotus of the heart, plunges deep into the ocean of Suṣumnā,¹ to rise at the feet of Kulakundalinī, singing Her song of the universe in Her Para melody.² Of all the methods for hearing the Sound-spiritual taught in different schools of Yoga, the Mantra Yoga is the best, straightest, and easiest, because the Mantra itself, being Sound-power, has greater aptitude than anything else to reach the bodily Sound-centres.

INITIATION (DĪKṢĀ), GURU (TEACHER) AND ŚIṢYA (DISCIPLE)

According to the Āyurvedik system of medicine, four factors are essential for successful treatment of a disease. They are called Khuddakā Catuṣṭhaya. They are physician, medicine, nurse, and patient. The physician must be capable of making a correct diagnosis of his patient's ailment, the medicine should be appropriate and powerful, the nurse must be dutiful, and the patient careful of his health and possessed of faith in his physician. A successful treatment of the disease of the soul, called Bhavaroga, or earthly sufferings, is, similarly, dependent upon four essential factors. The patient is the man who, convinced of the existence of the disease which has over-taken him, is anxious to be cured; Bhakti, or devotion, is his nurse; he is the Guru, or teacher, who can properly diagnose the particular form of the patient's illness, and impart to him the proper medicament—I mean Mantra—which has the potency to heal.

The disease of the soul needs much more physicking than the disease of the body, of which the patient is fully cognizant, and which is of comparatively shorter duration and can be diagnosed by objective means. But the disease of the soul is a chronic ailment of many births and re-births. The lot of such a patient is spiritually dismal, no doubt, but the glamour of Māyā transports him to a fool's paradise, where lust, avarice,

¹ The channel of energy (nāḍī) of that name situate in the spinal axis. See Arthur Avalon's "Serpent Power."

eed, power, and ambition feed him with dainty dishes, and lull him to forgetfulness of the disease which is eating into his very vitals. Fortunately the man who, knowing his real condition, is to be found at the lotus-feet of his Guru.

Knowledge of the human ego's real condition arises first mediately from a proper study of the Śāstras, and then directly by self-illumination. But the study of the Śāstras as a mere intellectual exercise is fraught with mischief. In the Kulārṇava Tantra the Lord has a significant admonition on this subject, which translated, runs thus:

“Fools led by the bondage of their animal nature fall into the deep well of the six systems of philosophy, and are unable to know what the paramārtha (supreme good) is. Perverse logicians, owing to their ignorance of the real meaning of the Vedas, roam here and there, scorched by the fire of scepticism. They do not know that within the surging waves of time they are under the mighty jaws of death. The man who knows the Vedas, Āgamas, and Purāṇas, but who is yet ignorant of the Paramārtha, and gives instructions, simply caws like a crow. Unmindful of the Paratattva (the Supreme), he is ever thinking of what is knowledge and what is knowable, and is immersed in study day and night. The words of such are flowing and rhetorical, but at heart they are anxious, sorry, and ill at ease. Men take great pains to prove the Paratattva to be what it is not. They explain the gist of the Śāstra to be what it is not. They explain supersensuous matters without themselves realizing them. Some, led by vanity, study the Vedas without a Guru's help; but a knower of the real sense of the Vedas is hard to find. As a spoon does not know the taste of the food cooked with it, as the head carries a load of flowers, but the nose enjoys its fragrance, so they study the Veda Śāstra, but, being ignorant of the Paramārtha (which is known only to Sādhakas), quarrel among themselves. As a milkman, forgetting the goat in his arms, sees it in its image in a well, even so are men, who are unconscious of the Paratattva that is in them, deluded by the Śāstras. As the darkness of a house can never be dispelled by uttering the word “lamp,” even so is the word-meaning of Śāstra impotent to dispel the māyik darkness of the Ego. The study of Śāstra by people not possessed of Prajñā—that is, the inner light—is as though a blind man opened his eyes to see. The Śāstra gives Divine knowledge (Tattvajñāna) to those who have Prajñā.”

अज्ञातज्ञापत्रं हि शास्त्रम् “The object of Śāstra is to impart such knowledge as cannot be gained through the senses.” It therefore stands to reason that the real meaning of Śāstra cannot be acquired merely through the brain. The door to supersensuous knowledge must be unlocked, and the sleeping Kula-Kuṇḍalinī awakened. This is done by Dīkṣā or initiation.

दीयते ज्ञानमत्यर्थं क्षीयते पाशबन्धनम् ।

अतो दीक्षेति देवेशि कथिता तत्त्वचिन्तकैः ॥

योगिनीतन्त्रम् ।

देवि! दीक्षाविहीनस्य न सिद्धिर्न च सद्गतिः ।

तस्मात् सर्वप्रयत्नेन गुरुणा दीक्षितो भवेत् ॥

रुद्रयामलम् ।

अदीक्षिता ये कुर्वन्ति जपपूजादिकाः क्रियाः ।

न भवन्ति प्रिये! तेषां शिलायामुत्तबीजवत् ॥

रुद्रयामलम् ।

रसेन्द्रेण यथा विद्धमयः काचनतां व्रजेत् ।

दीक्षाविद्धस्तथैवात्मा शिवत्वं लभते प्रिये! ॥

दीक्षामिदम्बकर्मासौ यायाद्विच्छिन्नबन्धनः ।

न तस्य कर्मबन्धोऽस्ति निर्जीवश्च शिवो भवेत् ॥

कल्पसूटीकाधृतं कुलार्णवतन्त्रम् ।

उपासनाशतेनापि यां विना नैव सिद्ध्यति ।

तां दीक्षामाश्रयेद्यन्तात् श्रीगुरोर्मन्त्रसिद्धये ॥

कुलार्णवम् ।

पुस्तके लिखितो मन्त्रो येन सुन्दरि जप्यते ।

न तस्य जायते सिद्धिर्हानिरेव पदे पदे ॥

राघवभट्टकृतम् ।

श्रुत्वा तन्त्रं गुरोर्लब्धं साधयेद्दीक्षितं मनुम् ।

गुरुमुख्याः क्रियाः सर्वा भुक्तिमुक्तिफलप्रदाः ॥

The above verses, rendered freely into English, read thus:

“Those who commune with the Divinity call it Dīkṣā because it imparts Divine knowledge and cuts worldly bonds” (Yoginī Tantra).

“He who has not been initiated cannot acquire Divine knowledge and cannot gain a desirable state after death. Hence it is that one should, by all means, get himself initiated by a Guru” (Rudra Yāmala).

“Those who, without being initiated, perform Japa, Pūja, etc. derive no benefit, even as seeds sown on stone, do not germinate.”

“As iron is transmuted into gold when it is penetrated by Rasendra (great fluid), even so is the individual Ego converted into the Divinity by Dikṣā. His Karma being burnt by the fire of Dikṣā, he becomes freed from the bondage of Karma, and thus the fetters of Karma being removed, the Jīva becomes Śiva” (Kulārṇava Tantra, quoted in the Commentary in Kalpasūtra).

“No amount of Upāsana (worship), without Dikṣā, can give Divine knowledge: so one should, by all means get himself initiated for the purpose of rendering the Mantra efficacious” (Kulārṇava Tantra).

“One cannot derive any benefit by repeating a Mantra, learnt from books; on the other hand, injury is incurred at every step” (quoted by Rāghava Bhatta).

“Having acquired the Mantra from the Guru, it should be cultivated in the disciple’s consciousness. Religious exercises for liberation are for fruition dependent entirely upon the Guru.”

From what has been stated regarding the Sound-Spiritual, Mantra and Kula-Kuṇḍalinī, it will have been seen that Mantra is a living spiritual sound-Power emanating from the vehicle of the Divine Serpent. The human Ego, born on the earth as the consequence of his actions in previous lives, must work out such Karmas as are germinating, and will also germinate Karmas for its weal or woe. He is placed here below in direct communication with the objective world through its five agents of knowledge and five agents of action. The knowledge acquired through the five senses is phenomenal: it is not true knowledge; it is knowledge as it seems, not knowledge as it is. It is the knowledge of actors as they appear on the stage, and not of the individuals who are dressed as actors in the green room. The green room of nature is hidden from the view of the senses. But it is in the green room that nature must be seen by the Ego in order that it may free itself from the glamour of māyā which has rendered it an earth-bound spirit. Unless one recognizes the reality, there is no escape from its semblance. But the physical brain is not the place where, nor are the senses the avenue through which, the one Reality, the All-blissful Sat-cit-ānanda enthroned in the effulgence of the spiritual world is to be seen. The human body is a duality not only in the objective plane, but in the subjective plane as well. The mind receives objective knowledge through the brain by means of the senses and the sensory nerves. It can receive subjective knowledge through the spinal column by means of senses which have to be developed. But the passage through which the green room of the human body must be entered is barred by the hood of the Slumbering Serpent Kula-Kuṇḍalinī. To wake Her up, to implore Her Divine grace that we may be shown the Real (which is no other than She), and that the unreal may be dispelled, is the

Electricity is ubiquitous. It is in every atom, in every molecule, and in every thing made up of atoms and molecules. My pen is made up of atoms and molecules. Why does it not, then, announce to me the existence of electricity in it? Why does it not fan me in this grilling heat and give brilliant light to my failing vision, although that is my earnest wish? The reason is that electricity, by processes known to experts, must be roused into action, and manipulated in different ways to yield different results. Mantra Śakti, similarly, is ubiquitous; it is in every form of existence. Indeed, from Sound-power the universe is built. It has countless forms which pervade the universe. It is the Guru, the Māntrik Scientist, who alone knows how to manipulate it and to employ it in producing the desired result—that is to say, in awakening the Slumbering Divine Serpent in man.

The mere communication of an atomic sound from one's mouth to another's ear cannot be expected to produce such a result. The Guru has himself to vitalize and energize the Mantra in his own inner consciousness, and then to communicate the living spiritual force to the consciousness of his disciple (Śiṣya). If there be reason to believe in transference of thought from a hypnotiser to his subject—and hypnotism has now been recognized as a science—there is no ground for disbelieving the transference of a power even subtler than a thought (which is a power as well) from a Guru to his disciple. When such an event happens in the life of a person, his whole mental system undergoes a revolution; he receives a second birth, and it is for this that an initiated man is a Dvija (twice-born). The Veda withheld the privileges of a Dvija from the fourth caste (Śūdra), but the Tantra throws the portals of initiation wide open to every man or woman, whoever he or she may be. The Caṇḍāla¹ and all others are all the children of the Divine Mother, the milk of whose eternal breast is sucked by every living being.

Dikṣā, thus, is not a conventional usage, a toll paid to the Divine ferryman for carrying the sojourner across the ocean of the world (Bhavasindhu). Spiritual India has, unfortunately, come to this pass, and it is the Tantra which can alone save it, as it has saved it in the Kali Yuga of every Kalpa.

Śabdabrahmamayī, the Divine Mother, must be reached. A deep, surging sea divides the sojourning Ego from Her. It is the Black Sea of objective knowledge, the Vaitaraṇī of Hindu mythology. Mantra is the bark to carry it thither. The Guru must help the Ego in each of its steps forward into the region of the unknown. Indeed, without the Guru's help the disciple cannot move one such step. The disciple must also work hard, under the instructions of the Guru, to keep up the energy of the Mantra.

and when Mantra is assimilated in the inner consciousness of the disciple, he is said to have become Siddha (accomplished) in it. He can then use it at his will, and, awakening Kula-Kuṇḍalinī, plunge with Her into the Lotus-garden, where alone the nature of the Ātmā and Anātmā¹ can be realized. The human body, according to the Tantra, is a microcosm, which contains in miniature all that is contained in the Kosmos. It has the seven Lokas, worlds or regions located in it, and the Sādhaka, who, with the help of his Bija Mantra, has known them and their over-Lords, has left the mother's womb never to come back again. It may here be noted by way of parenthesis that the seven Lokas are not states of existence, but worlds made up of different modifications of matter, and peopled by beings on different planes of consciousness.

Such being Dikṣā, imagine what the Guru is!

गुरौ तुष्टे शिवस्तुष्टो रुष्टे रुष्टस्त्रिलोचनः ।

गुरौ तुष्टे शिवा तुष्टा रुष्टे रुष्टा च सुन्दरी ॥

अतो गुरुर्महेशानि! संसारार्णवलङ्घने ।

कर्त्ता पाता च हर्त्ता च गुरुर्मोक्षप्रदायकः ॥

.गुरुतन्त्रम् ।

“If the Guru is pleased, Śiva is pleased; if he is displeased, Śiva is displeased. If the Guru is pleased, Śivānī² is pleased; if the Guru is displeased, Śivānī is displeased. Hence, O Maheśānī!² the Guru is the Lord, the sustainer and the annihilator. It is he who can give Mokṣa” (Guru Tantra).

But the human Guru is not the real Guru. The real Guru is in the Thousand-petalled Lotus. The human Guru bears the same relation to the Divine Guru that Vācaka Śakti of a Mantra bears to the Vācya Śakti. The Yoginī Tantra thus explains Guruship:

ओं देव्युवाच ।

गुरुः को वा महेशान वद मे करुणामय ।

त्वत्तोऽप्यधिक एवायं गुरुस्त्वया प्रकीर्तितः ॥

श्रीईश्वर उवाच ।

आदिनाथो महादेवि महाकालो हि यः स्मृतः ।

गुरुः स एव देवेशि सर्वमन्त्रेषु नापरः ॥

शैवे शाक्ते वैष्णवे च गाणपत्ये तथैन्दवे ।
 महाशैवे च सौरै च स गुरुर्नात्र संशयः ॥
 मन्त्रवक्ता स एव स्यान्नापरः परमेश्वरि ।
 मन्त्रप्रदानकाले हि मानुषे गिरिनन्दिनि ।
 अधिष्ठानं भवेत्तस्य महाकालस्य शंकरि ॥
 अतो न गुरुता देवि मानुषे नात्रसंशयः ।
 मन्त्रदाता शिरःपद्मे यद्वद्यानं कुरुते गुरोः ।
 तद्वद्यानं कुरुते देवि शिष्योऽपि शीर्षपङ्कजे ॥
 अत एव महेशानि एक एव गुरुः स्मृतः ।
 अविष्ठानवशात् तस्य मानुषस्य महेश्वरि ।
 माहात्म्यं कीर्तितं तस्य सर्वशास्त्रेषु शंकरि ॥

“Śrī Devī said: ‘Merciful Maheśvara! tell me who is Guru. You have told me that the Guru is greater than Thou art.’ Śrī Īśvara said: ‘He who is the first Lord and is called Mahākāla is the Guru, O Devī in all Mantras. None else is the Guru. He is verily the Guru of the Śaivas, Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas, Gāṇapatyas, Moon-worshippers, Mahāśaivas and Sauras.¹ He and none else is the promulgator of Mantra. At the time of imparting Mantra, O Daughter of mountain², He manifests Himself in him who imparts Mantra. Hence, O Devī! verily there is no Guruship in man. The human Mantra-giver meditates upon the same Guru in the Head-Lotus as Him upon whom the disciple must there meditate. Therefore, O Maheśvarī! there is only one Guru. Because He manifests himself in the human Guru, therefore the greatness of the human Guru is published in all the Śāstras.”

The Yāmala Tantra says:

गुरुरेकः शिवः प्रोक्तः सोऽहं देवि न संशयः ।
 गुरुस्त्वमपि देवेशि मन्त्रोऽपि गुरुरुच्यते ॥
 अतो मन्त्रे गुरौ देवि नहि भेदः प्रजायते ।
 कदाचित् स सहस्रारे पद्मे ध्येयो गुरुः सदा ।
 कदाचित् हृदयाम्भोजे कदाचित् दृष्टिगोचरे ॥

“There is only one Guru, who undoubtedly is Myself; Thou, too, O Devī! and Mantra, too, is Guru. Therefore Guru, Devatā, and Mantra,

¹ Vide ante.

are the same. He is always to be contemplated in the Thousand-petalled Lotus, sometimes in the Heart-Lotus, and sometimes as existing before the eyes—that is, in human form.”

In initiating and instructing a disciple, the human Guru undertakes a vicarious duty, the magnitude of which he should fully realize. He must fill himself with the Divine Presence, that his Śiṣya may be born to the spiritual life. He must also, impart to his disciple that sure knowledge which will lead him without error on the onward path of Sādhana. Henceforward the life of the disciple becomes a part of the Guru's life. The Guru becomes responsible for the sins of his disciple.

We are apt to complain of the rarity of the Gurus, but we do not pause to consider the paucity of Śiṣyas (disciples). Gaṇapati, the elephant-headed Devatā, by the grace of His Divine mother, had the consolation to believe that He was the best of singers. We, too, by the grace of Avidyā, have an overweening confidence in our intellectual attainments, thinking that we are perfectly qualified to receive the highest spiritual instructions.

The Gautamiya Tantra says:

शिष्यः कुलीनः शुद्धात्मा पुरुषार्थपरायणः ।

अधीतवेदः कुशलः पितृमातृहिते रतः ॥

धर्मविद्धर्मकर्ता च गुरुशुश्रूषणे रतः ।

सदा शास्त्रार्थतन्वज्ञो दृढदेही दृढाशयः ॥

हितैषी प्राणिनां नित्यं परलोकार्थकर्मकृत् ।

वाङ्मनःकायवसुभिर्गुरुशुश्रूषणे रतः ॥

अनित्यकर्मणस्त्यागी नित्यानुष्ठानतत्परः ।

जितेन्द्रियो जिज्ञासुर्जितमोहो विमत्सरः ॥

“The Śiṣya (disciple) should be of good parentage, pure-minded, bent upon realizing the fourfold aspirations;¹ he should be learned in the Vedas, diligent, devoted to the welfare of parents; he should know Dharma and practise it; he should serve the Guru; he should be acquainted with the true meaning of the Śāstras; he should possess a strong physique and a strong mind. He should always do good to living objects; he should do only such deeds as are good for the after-life. He should serve the Guru by speech, thought, body, and money. He should avoid works of which the result is transitory, and be diligent in working for enduring results. He should be one who has conquered passions, indolence, illusory knowledge (Moha), and anger.”

From the above it will appear that to be a real Śiṣya mere intellectual attainment is not sufficient. While he should be conversant with the Śāstras (scriptures) to enable him to understand what he is, what his destiny is, what relation he bears to the universe and to the Lord of the universe, he should have purified his mind from the thousand and one worldly pursuits which detract rather than bring peace to it. He should diligently do what the Śāstras enjoin, and scrupulously avoid un-Śāstrik actions. He should have a living faith in his religion, and an earnest, irrepressible longing for spiritual advancement. Lust, anger, and their train should not be his masters. His profession should be in strict accordance with Śāstrik morality. He should consciously do nothing that hurts or injures a fellow-being, and the milk of his kindness should ever flow to relieve suffering humanity. These and many other qualifications are required of the aspirant to the great path. It is also stated that a candidate must remain under the personal observation of a Guru for a whole year before he can hope to be initiated. Deluded by Avidyā, however, we do not pause to reflect whether the field in which the seed is to be sown is worthy of it. Sometimes, in our impatience (which is a state of mind quite unfitted for spiritual culture), we fly to sannyāsīs (ascetics), and, getting ourselves initiated by them, hasten homeward, hardly knowing that thereby we transgress a positive injunction of the Śāstra, and place ourselves in difficulties. It is laid down in the Tantras :

मातामहं च पितरं यतिं च वनवासिनम् ।
वर्जयित्वा च शिष्येन्द्रो दीक्षाविधिमुपाचरेत् ।
अन्यथा तद्विरोधेन कायनाशं भवेद्भुवम् ॥

यामलतन्त्रम् ।

यतेर्दीक्षा पितुर्दीक्षा दीक्षा च वनवासिनः ।
विविक्ताश्रमिणो दीक्षा न सा कल्याणदायिनी ॥

गणेशविमर्शिनीतन्त्रम् ।

आश्रमी देशस्थायी च गुरुरेवं विधीयते ।
विश्वसारतन्त्रम् ।

पुत्रदारैश्च संपन्नो गुरुरागमसंमतः ।

मत्स्यसूक्तम् ।

आश्रमी ध्याननिष्ठश्च मन्त्रतन्त्रविशारदः ।

"In the initiation one should exclude the maternal grandfather, father, a Sannyāsi, and Vānaprastha,¹ otherwise, there being contrariety in the respective positions of Guru and Śiṣya, the Śiṣya is sure to meet death."

"Initiation by a Yati,² by one's father, by a Vānaprastha,¹ or by a Sannyāsi is not favourable to the welfare of a Śiṣya."

"One should receive Dikṣā from a householder residing in the same locality with the Śiṣya."

"The Tantra enjoins initiation from a Guru who has wife and children."

"The Guru should be a householder, meditative and well versed in Tāntrik knowledge and in Mantra."

The reason why a man who has freed himself of the illusory world and stands outside of it is ill-qualified to show the light, step by step, to a disciple whirling in the eddies of the world is plain enough. A Sannyāsi is one who has given up Karma, his mind having been purified. He is an Advaiti,³ whose only avocation is the realization of the One without a second. But a householder is a man in, even if he be not of, the world. He is practically a Dvaiti,⁴ though intellectually he may not be so. His distracted mind must be soothed by worship, prayer, and hymn, and by other acts of devotion (Bhakti) to his Iṣṭadevatā.⁵ A Sannyāsi, on the other hand, is a Jñāni (one possessed of true knowledge) who, having crossed the threshold of Bhakti (devotion), looks down upon it as an illusion, an unreality. The mental attitudes of a householder and of a Sannyāsi are poles asunder. It is, therefore inevitable that, in spite of his best endeavours, a Sannyāsi's teachings must contain much that is unassimilable by a householder, who, by his strenuous efforts to practise such instructions, must succumb bodily and mentally.

A householder Guru, on the other hand, is much on the same plane of consciousness with his disciple. Though in the small rowing-boat of Bhakti (devotion), he has oared manfully towards the ship of his destination, and neared it. His Bhakti is suffused with the Divine halo of Jñāna (knowledge). He is the fittest person to lead a world-ridden disciple by the hand, instructing him in every point, and teaching him by personal example:

स्वयमाचरते शिष्यमाचारे स्थापयत्यपि ।

रुद्रयामलम् ।

¹ One who has gone to the forest according to the rule of the third Āśrama.

² Ascetic.

³ A spiritual monist, not a mere philosophical monist, but one who himself in various degrees experientially realizes the truth of that doctrine.

“Himself practises and puts disciples in practice” (Rudra Yāmala). Those who are real aspirants need not encumber their progress by adhering to the ancestral Guru. If they have already been initiated by him, they may leave him and find out a higher one.

The Kāmākhyā Tantra says:

सर्वेषां भुवने सत्यं ज्ञानाय गुरुरेव हि ।
 ज्ञानान्मोक्षमवाप्नोति तस्माज्ज्ञानं परात्परम् ॥
 अतो यो ज्ञानं न दत्ते न क्षमेत्तं त्यजेत्युस्म ।
 अन्नाकाङ्क्षी निरन्नं हि सदा संत्यजति प्रिये ॥
 ज्ञानं यत्र समाभाति स गुरुः शिव एव हि ।
 अज्ञानिनं वर्जयित्वा शरणं ज्ञानिनां ब्रजेत् ॥
 मधुलब्धो यथा भृङ्गः पुष्पात् पुष्पान्तरं ब्रजेत् ।
 ज्ञानलब्धस्तथा शिष्यो गुरोर्गुर्वन्तरं ब्रजेत् ॥

कामाख्यातन्त्रम् ॥

“A Guru exists to impart Jñānas (different forms of knowledge). Jñāna leads one to Mokṣa (liberation). Hence Jñāna is the supreme good. Therefore the Guru who is incapable of imparting Jñāna should be abandoned, as one who is desirous of food abandons the person who has no food to give. One in whom Jñāna shines is Guru; he is Śiva. Abandoning the ignorant, one should take the shelter of the wise. As a bee roams from flower to flower in quest of honey, even so should a Śiṣya, in quest of Jñāna, go from one Guru to another.”

If the ancestral Guru be really ignorant, there is nothing in the Tantra Śāstra to compel one to seek initiation from him. But I feel the necessity of a word in favour of this much-abused man. I fear the Hindu Society is much more to blame than the ancestral Guru for this state of things. There was a happy time when every Hindu deemed it his duty not only to be initiated, but to practise worship with devotion and piety. Many amongst the higher classes lived a life which was rather religious than a purely social one. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the Guru so to qualify himself as to render himself a being higher than those around him. But the Hindu mind having considerably receded from such an ideal of life, initiation and worship are disregarded. There being very little demand for real initiation and instruction in true worship, the supply of duly qualified Gurus has naturally fallen off. That the Guru-class still exists is due, to a large extent, to our love for the husk with which we want to fill the social granary. The Gurus, moreover, are now

giving up the profession. It is the paramount duty of the Hindus of the present generation to reform the Guru community, which can, I think, be easily effected by fostering the growth of a sincere and earnest desire to learn and to practise among ourselves.

There is one aspect of initiation which I have left untouched for want of information—I mean its astrological aspect. It is said that the nativity of a candidate and the particular Mantra in which he should be initiated are correlated. As I am not an astrologer, I am not competent to speak as to this. Those who profess to be astrologers are really empirics, and, having no scientific knowledge of astrology, cannot explain this correlation. But opinions are divided amongst Tāntriks on this point, and so it need not trouble us.

THE OCTAGON OF SELF-CULTURE

In the previous sections I have attempted to give the reader the result of a general survey of the philosophy upon which Tāntrik Sādhana, or Self-culture, is based. But in so recondite and unfamiliar a subject, where the correctness of every individual interpretation may be called in question, the reader is requested to go himself to the source, and there, with faith and devotion, and under the guidance of a Guru, drink of its waters.

I shall now address myself to the subject of the supreme importance of Tāntrik Sādhana, which, as already observed, is the easiest and the straightest path to follow for men of the Kali Yuga.¹ I should not be understood to preach Śākta Dharma² to one and all. The Tāntrik method of spiritual culture is not, as I have already said, sectarian. The Tantra provides paths of culture for all the five classes of Upāsakas (worshippers) in Hinduism, and an advanced Tāntrik Guru is as capable of illumining the path of a Vaiṣṇava as that of a Śākta.

The path of Dharma is twofold: the path of desire (pravṛtti) and the path of cessation of desire (nivṛtti). These two paths are in conformity with the two great Powers which are perpetually at work in the universe. One of the Powers is called Māyā and the other Mahāmāyā. They are the two phases of the one immutable Śakti. Māyā weaves the woof and the warp of Evolution from Spirit to matter; Mahāmāyā frees the Ego from its Karmik garb, and leads it on to its destination. To sail downstream is easy enough. It needs no toil, no struggle. The current is favourable; hoist the sail of your Desires on the mast of your untrained

¹ The present, the last, and worst of the ages.

Will, and sail pleasantly along. But your pleasure is short-lived; there is sorrow in all of it. Like Sisyphus, you roll your stone up the mountain-top only to come down again. And as the desires, even of the most intellectually cultured, know no bounds, the Ego is drowned more and more in the quagmire of matter, forgetting its own self, and foregoing the privileges of a human Ego which after millions of journeyings, it has had the good fortune to acquire. The soft heart of the Divine Mother cannot bear to see Her children thus lost. She steps in and proclaims Pravṛtti Dharma, which her ordinary children must follow, so that in the long-run Pravṛtti may lead to Nivṛtti. This Dharma is work prescribed in the Śāstras to be performed with Bhakti or devotion to God for accomplishing definite results. Pravṛtti being bridled by Dharma, unrestrained licence of desires is prevented, and the sojourner on the Pravṛtti path begins to learn Bhakti or devotion. The fulfilment of his desires, however worldly, depends upon the favour of God whom he invokes from the depths of his heart. He performs the rites and ceremonies prescribed for the particular object he has in view with austerities and penances which are required, and thus, though the mainspring of his action be selfish, he unconsciously develops his higher instincts and nobler nature. From hankering after sensuous pleasure in the shape of money, power, fame, popularity, progeny, and so forth, he gradually lifts his eyes upwards and longs for power in the unseen world. He devotes his mind and soul to its acquisition. And when he is fortunate enough to obtain but a morsel of it, he at once realizes the nothingness of worldly desires. He forthwith parts with them as a serpent parts with its dead skin. The worshipper on the path of desire now lives in the supersensuous world; his worldly hankerings have ceased at any rate to a considerable extent, and he has made more progress towards the path of Nivṛtti than one whose desires are not restrained by Dharma, and who depends solely upon his own resources to combat Pravṛtti.

To combat Pravṛtti! How sweetly sounds the phrase! To do works for others! How much sweeter still! Let us not deceive ourselves, as we are apt to do. The octopus-like grasp of our cumulated Karma, extending over millions of births and rebirths, is so firm that it is impossible to free ourselves from it unless we begin in Pravṛtti Dharma and end in Nivṛtti. Is it possible for anyone to jump from the bottomless abyss of desires to the celestial height of Nivṛtti by a single leap? There must be intermediate rounds on the ladder, for nature does not work by leaps and bounds; sequences of causes and effects pervade it. Not even the Lokapālas, Dikpālas,¹ and Lords higher still are free from desires, though they, by spiritualizing many of such desires, have risen higher and higher on the

upward path of progress. How can one be selfless unless he has dedicated his self to the Lord of all selves? And how can one dedicate his self to the Lord of all selves by one single bound? As householders (Gṛhīs) we are chained to the world by a thousand and one knots. Our family, our lust, our greed, our avarice, our ambition, all bind us down. We are overwhelmed with desires even unto death. Where, then, is our altruism? If there were a scalpel to open the mind, or an X-ray apparatus to display it, it would doubtless be found that altruism is, in many a case, traceable to love of fame, love of popular applause, love of power, and other little self-loves. It is intense love of God alone which can make a person selfless in action. It is very unfortunate that in the name of altruistic work many English-educated Hindus have given up Pravṛtti Dharma, the inestimable boon which the wise, holy Ṛṣis have given us for our salvation.

In the Bhagavadgītā, the Lord (I adopt Mrs. Besant's translation) says:

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
 अतो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥
 तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकमक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
 प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽस्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥
 उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
 आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥
 बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।
 वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

“Fourfold in division are the righteous ones who worship Me, O Arjuna: the suffering, the seeker for knowledge, the self-interested, and the wise. Of these the wise, constantly harmonized, worshipping the One, is the best; I am supremely dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these; but I hold the wise as verily Myself; he, self-united, is fixed on Me, the highest goal. At the close of many births the man full of wisdom cometh unto Me. ‘Vāsudeva is all,’ saith he, the Mahātmā, very difficult to find.”

Of the four kinds of worshippers mentioned by Bhagavān, the *ārtta* and the *arthārthī* (the suffering and self-interested) are Sakāma Upāsakas,¹

¹ Worshippers for reward, and with the view to benefits to be gained such as the worshipper whose action is determined by the hope of gaining the pleasures of heaven or avoiding the pains of hell; as contrasted with the Niskāma Sādhaka who acts for God's good sake only, and not because such

who are on the path of desire. All the worshippers are called "sukṛtinah" (righteous)—that is, even those who are on the path of desire, have germs of good work in them, otherwise worship would not have formed a part of their work. "Udārāḥ sarva eva te"—that is, all of them are noble, dear to God, because the Godward mind, even if selfish, attains an amount of mental purification and contentment which is impossible for others to acquire. The last couplet means that a true Jñānī—an advaitist¹ is a product of many, many births, and that such a Mahātmā² is very rare. It will thus be seen that Pravṛtti Dharma has a place in self-culture, however low compared with the highest, that place may be. It is for those who cannot dissociate their minds from worldly desires. And I need hardly say that the bulk of humanity is of that temperament. If there be a blessed few amongst us who have governed their desires effectually, who are rather in than of the world, Pravṛtti Dharma, like dry leaves of trees, will fall from off them; but they are not, therefore, justified in giving up the Śāstrik Dharma-Karma. The Lord Himself has exhorted them to perform religious works prescribed in the Śāstra selflessly for the instruction of the mass of men. Like a patient who accepts his physician's diagnosis but rejects his prescription, it would be the height of folly to accept Hindu philosophy and to reject its practice.

The Tāntrik system of culture on the path of desire is remarkable for its aptitude in producing desired results. This is known to Hindus of all denominations. But it is not a mere hankering after worldly benefits. On the contrary, the Sakāma Sādhaka longs more for a glimpse into the arcana of nature than for mundane comforts, and his longing is soon crowned with success. And having acquired a personal proof positive of supersensuous things, the vanity of sensuous desires forces itself upon him in a manner that mere Śravaṇa (study) and Manana (contemplation) can hardly approach. This, it must be conceded, is a long leap forward. To withdraw the mind from worldly attractions and repulsions many births and rebirths have to be spent in study, contemplation, and discrimination. The Tāntrik, on the much-despised path of desire, however, transfers his consciousness from mundane attractions and repulsions to a higher plane of existence within one life and even a much shorter period. Although it cannot give him Mukti (liberation)—and Mukti is not a bunch of grapes to be had by the mere stretching of the hand upwards to the trellis on which they hang—it can make him a Lokapāla, a Dikpāla,³ a Manvantarādhipati,⁴ or the like.

¹ See ante.

² Great soul.

³ Lords of the regions and quarters.

It must not be supposed that the Sakāma Tāntrik worships Devatās¹ as the Divinity. He no doubt pays homage to Devatās as higher beings; but the object of his worship is the Divine Mother, who is the same as Mahāviṣṇu, the manifested God, and the methods of his worship are very much the same as those of the worshipper on the Nivṛtti path. What is stated in the Gītā as to the consequences of worshipping Devatās, Pitṛs, and Bhūtas has no application to a Tāntrik, the ladder of whose spiritual culture begins with the path of desire as the lowest round, and ends at that of which none knows—that is, Kaivalya Mukti, or complete liberation.

So long as a man is a Gṛhī (householder), so long is his path the path of Pravṛtti. If he thinks that he has outgrown it, but at the same time earns money, enjoys the world, forms attachments and repulsions, seeks name, fame, and popular applause, discharges the functions of a father of his household and of a member of the community in which he lives, he deceives himself. The path pointed out to him by the Tāntrik is the best that he can have as an individual, as the father of a family, and as a member of society. The Tāntrik culture is an all-round growth. It makes the body sturdy and strong, and proof to heat, cold, and rains; it wards off diseases from without, and resists diseases from within; it makes one hardy, painstaking, and patient. His will being regularly trained, he is resolute and intrepid. All these qualities of body and mind render him as much a useful member of society as a humble suppliant for the dust of the Mother's feet. As for altruism, people thus trained are taught from the very beginning to do good to others. परोपकारव्रतिनां साधूनां किङ्करः कलिः । “Kali is the slave of those pious men, the rule of whose life is to do good to others,” says the Tantra.

Now let us pass to the study of the path of cessation, called the path of Nivṛtti. Those whose minds have become sāttvik by the reduction of their rājasik desires through practice on the path of desire, and those fortunate few whose past lives have prepared them for it, are the fit Adhikārīs² on the Nivṛtti path. The Hindu Śāstras, whether Vaidik or Tāntrik, regard Adhikāra or personal competency as the most important factor in determining the mode of culture to be prescribed for a candidate. The Guru must test the mental calibre, moral proclivity, and physical aptitude of his would-be disciple (śiṣya), and must point out to him that path for which he is the most suited.

¹ The writer here refers to the higher Intelligence intermediate between Īśvara and man. Devatā is used also in another sense. Thus, the Divine Mother in Her various leading forms is called Devatā.

² Persons competent for a thing. The whole of Hinduism rests on the

Sādhakas on the path of cessation of desire are divided into two classes—*viz.*, those who are yet bound by the ties and conventionalities of the world, and those who have got rid of, or are resolved to get rid of, them. Their methods of culture are different. The ties and conventions are called Pāśa—that is, fetters. They are eight in number, as the Kulārṇava Tantra says:

वृणा लज्जा भयं शोको जुगुप्सा चाथ पञ्चमी ।

कुलं शीलं तथा जातिरष्टौ पाशाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥

कुलार्णवतन्त्रम् ।

“Aversion, shame, fear, grief, disgust, family, custom, and caste; these are declared as fetters.”

I need hardly point out that there is hardly one among a million who can say that he is free from these fetters. And there are but few who struggle to sail clear of them. My task is to study the Sādhana of Adhikāris of the former class. This Sādhana may be roughly, though not exhaustively, classed under four heads: 1. Sandhyā, or obligatory daily service. 2. Upāsana, or worship. 3. Śaṭcakrabhedā. 4. Mudrā Sādhana. The first two of these will form the subject of this section.

In Patañjali's Yoga Śāstra eight methods are laid down as modes of self-culture for realizing the True Self. They are: 1. Constant practice, and Vairāgya or that state of mind which is proof against worldly attractions and repulsions. 2. Worship of the manifested God. 3. Prāṇāyāma, or regulation of breath. 4. Concentration of mind on any one of the objects of the senses.¹ 5. Concentration in the heart-lotus. 6. Concentration with a mind free from desires.² 7. Concentration on the particular image of the Godhead worshipped by the Sādhaka, as it appears in the dream-state, and on the Sāttvik nature of the mind in dreamless sleep. 8. Meditation on any object of liking.

Excepting Nos. 4 and 6, which are particular modes of concentration practised by Tāntriks in Śaṭcakrabhedā³ and secret worship,⁴ the Tāntrik Upāsana includes all these and much more. I shall first take up the last, about which much misconception seems to prevail. The original text is:

यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा ।

“And by meditation on any object of liking” (the being copulative and not alternative).

¹ Viśayavatī vā pravṛtīrutpannā sthitinibandhani. (Patañjala, 1-35).

² Vitarāga viśayādvā cittam (*ib.* 1-37).

³ As in Dhyāna on the gandha tattva in the Mūlādhāra, etc.

⁴ Rahaśya pūjā; a special mode of worship undertaken with the object of

Vyāsa's commentary on the above aphorism is:

यदेवामितं तदेव ध्यायेत्, तत्र लब्धस्थितिकमन्यत्राणि स्थितिपदं लभते ।

“Whatever may be the object of one's liking, let him meditate upon that. If the mind settles upon that particular object, it may settle also elsewhere.”

This aphorism does not give unbridled licence to practise concentration upon any object at random. There are people who have very pronounced predilections for particular objects which they are unable to ignore. It is for these people that the above wholesome advice is given. An anecdote may here be related in illustration of this. Once upon a time there lived a very pious King, who was earnest upon giving a religious training to his son. He repaired to a famous Yogī for whom he entertained great respect. After the usual exchange of greetings the King said: “Mahātman! If you please, I should like to have my son initiated by your Holiness.” “Very well, my son,” replied the Yogī, “send him hither.” The King, very much gratified, prostrated himself before the holy man, and sped homeward. The day after the royal scion appeared before the Yogī, and paid his obeisance. “God bless you, child; Live here, and make yourself comfortable,” said the Yogī to him.

The royal youth, however, found not much in the Yogī's Āśrama (hermitage) to comfort him, but the wild scene, the beautiful rivulet, the ravine, and the birds' song made captive his heart. For three or four days he was found to enjoy Nature, but in the midst of his enjoyment he was observed suddenly to sigh and become pensively meditative. One day the Yogī asked him: “Child, what ails you?” “Sir,” replied the Prince, “I have a beautiful young elephant at home, which I love with all my heart. Its absence pains me.” “Very well I shall send for it,” said the holy man. The day after the young elephant was brought. The Prince's joy knew no bounds; he began to caress it, kiss it. The Yogī said “Child, the first lesson I give you is to forget everything else and to concentrate your mind upon this young elephant.” “I obey,” said the Prince. A year after the Yogī inquired: “Well, how far have you progressed?” The Prince said: “I have not yet been successful.” The Yogī encouraged him to persevere. Two years rolled on. One day the Prince appeared before the Yogī, and said: “Holy Father, my mind is completely lost in the image of the young elephant. I see it everywhere. There is nothing else in the world to captivate my mind.” “Sarvamangalā¹ bless you, my child, you have quickly won the battle. Come now and be initiated in the Mantra of your Iṣṭadevatā.”² So saying, the holy one put the Prince on the path.

¹ The all-auspicious Goddess.

The reader will thus find that the choice of the object of concentration does not depend upon individual caprice. If the mind be so weak that it cannot readily part with its predilections, it is by a regulated exercise of those predilections that the ever-roving mind is settled. It is but a temporary arrangement for rare cases. To reduce the mind to a focus is a task of great magnitude, perhaps of a whole life. Nothing should be allowed to be identified with the mind except a Divine image—that is, a form in which Divinity incarnates, and for this plain reason that what a man thinks upon *that* he becomes. If one concentrates upon a glass ball, a glass ball shall he become. Says Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

In the Tāntrik Mantra the worshipper finds an image of the Incarnation of the Divinity, not a dead image, a shadow, but an image which, by Sādhana, can be conjured up into the Divinity itself, the spiritual power inherent in the Mantra fortifying the will-power of the Sādhaka to produce this result. From the very outset a Sādhaka is enjoined to fill his mind with the thought that he and the Divinity are one and the same. The realization of सोऽहम् (I am He) is the aim and end of his worship.

The Tāntrik Sandhyā is an obligatory service, which must be performed thrice a day—at dawn, at noon, and at sunset. It opens with a Mantra, which reminds the worshipper that his individual self is really no other than the one Self, manifested in the universe as the male and the female Power. The Mātrkā Śaktis are then brought into requisition to render his body and mind active with their soul-inspiring energy. The worshipper pays homage to the Devas, Ṛṣis, Pitṛs, to his Guru,¹ and to humanity. With a libation of water he declares: मनुष्यांस्तर्पयामि—that is “I gratify mankind.”

As the Divine Mother is in everything and everything is in Her, service to every living being, whether human or not, is a part of his religion.

Meditation, concentration, Prāṇāyāma, and Japa are the principal features of Sandhyā. The object of Prāṇāyāma is to bring the involuntary act of breathing under control, and suspend its action at the will of the Sādhakā. The constituents of the subtle body are the vital air, the sensorium and the mind. The latter is intimately connected with breath. The breath serves as an instrument to introduce the mind to the world without. If one can regulate the breath, he can control the otherwise uncontrollable mind. The more one learns this art, the more is his will-power developed, the more is he enabled to concentrate his mind upon a particular object, and the more do his passions cease. As breath is the

measure of life, and not days, years, and months, the Sādhaka's span of life is prolonged, and his body is rendered immune to diseases. Life is a resultant of the kinetic karmik forces of a man in his previous birth. The karmic forces, either potential or kinetic, become a part of the mental sheath of the reincarnating Ego along with its sensorium and vital power, which latter is manifested in the body as breath. Breath is the nexus which joins the body with the mind. Control it, and you control the dalliance of the mind with the external world through the body. Prāṇāyāma is, therefore, an indispensable aid to meditation, concentration, and the development of will-power.

In his commentary on verse 7, chap. ii, of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, Śaṅkarācārya quotes from Śruti:

प्राणायामविशुद्धात्मा यस्मात् पश्यति तत्परम् ।

तस्मान्नातः परं किञ्चित् प्राणायामादिति श्रुतिः ॥

“‘The soul being purified by Prāṇāyāma realizes Parabrahman, hence there is nothing higher than Prāṇāyāma,’ thus says Śruti.”

He then says:

“First, Yajñas and other works should be performed, then Prāṇāyāma, etc.; then Communion, then knowledge of Vedāntic teaching, and then liberation.”

Then, in his commentary on verse 8 of the same chapter, he says: “Because the man, the impurities of whose mind have been cleansed by Prāṇāyāma is able to concentrate his mind on Brahman, therefore Prāṇāyāma is introduced (in this Upaniṣad). At first the nerves should be purified, and after that one becomes fit to practise Prāṇāyāma.”

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad says (chap. ii, verse 9):

प्राणान् प्रपीडयेह संयुक्तचेष्टः क्षीणे प्राणे नासिकयोच्छृसीत ।

दुष्टाश्वयुक्तमिव बाहमेनं विद्वान् मनो धारयेताप्रमत्तः ॥

“A wise man should skilfully regulate his breath. When the Prāṇa becomes feeble it should be let off through the nostrils in small quantities. When one thus becomes gradually accustomed to holding the breath, the mind, like a chariot drawn by unruly horses—that is, senses—becomes fixed and fitted for Brahma-Jñāna” (knowledge of the Brahman).

In Chapter XIV, Skandha XI, of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, in answer to Uddhava's question as to how one who desires mukti (liberation) should contemplate Him, Bhagavān says: “Sitting at ease upon an Āsana (seat), with his body steady, the devotee must, keeping the palms of

the hands one upon another upon the lap, one should fix his eyes upon the tip of his nose; then, governing all the senses, the path of breath should be cleansed by Pūraka (drawing in the breath), Kumbhaka (holding it) and Recaka (giving it out). Having by Prāṇāyāma drawn the senses from their respective objects, practice should also be made by degress in an opposite direction. The sound ओं (Om) in the heart, which is like a continuous bell-sound, should be drawn upwards by Prāṇāyāma, and then Bindu should be placed upon it. In this wise Prāṇāyāma, with ओं (Om), should be practised ten times in each of the three Sandhyās. By doing this the breath is conquered within a month."

It will thus be seen that the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, and the Tantras with one voice proclaim the supreme importance of Prāṇāyāma in self-culture. It is, however, the Tantra which has preserved the knowledge of the mode of practice of this noble art, and it is the Tāntriks who can teach it. Śaṅkarācārya, in his commentary above quoted, mentions नाद्विग्रहि, or purification of the Nādis,¹ as a condition precedent to practising Prāṇāyāma. I believe the Tāntriks are the only Gurus who know how to do it. Prāṇāyāma is essential in Sandhyā, Upāsana, and Śaṭcakra Sādhana. But it must be learnt very cautiously and with the help of a Guru. As it has to be learnt by degrees it forms an essential part of daily service.

Sandhyā is mental exercise. The image of the Divine Mother, which is potential in the worshipper's Iṣṭa-Mantra² and described in what is generally known as Dhyāna (Contemplation), must be done in the mind. The mental image thus arising should be identified with the all-pervading Divine Mother, and concentration practised upon it.

Dhyāna (meditation) is of two kinds, Sūkṣma and Sthūla—that is, supersensuous and sensuous,

स्थूलसूक्ष्मविभेदेन ध्यानं तु द्विविधं भवेत् ।

सूक्ष्मं मन्त्रमयं देहं स्थूलं विग्रहचिन्तनम् ॥

करपादोदरस्यापि रूपं यत् स्थूलविग्रहम् ।

सूक्ष्मं च प्रकृते रूपं परं ज्ञानमयं स्मृतम् ॥

सूक्ष्मं च प्रकृते रूपं परं ज्ञानमयं स्मृतम् ॥

स्थूलध्यानं महेशानि कृत्वा मोक्षमवाप्नुयात् ।

यामलतन्त्रम् ।

¹ "Nerves." See Arthur Avalon's "Serpent Power," and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

ध्यानं तु द्विविधं प्रोक्तं सरूपारूपभेदतः ।

अरूपं तव यद्ध्यानमवाङ्मनसगोचरम् ।

अव्यक्तं सर्वतो व्याप्तमिदमित्थं विवर्जितम् ॥

अगम्यं योगिभिर्गम्यं कृत्स्नैर्बहुसमाधिभिः ।

मनसो धारणार्थाय शीघ्रं स्वाभीष्टसिद्धये ।

सूक्ष्मध्यानं पुरोघाय स्थूलध्यानं वदामि ते ॥

महानिर्वाणतन्त्रम् ।

The Yāmala says:

“Dhyāna is of two kinds, Sthūla (gross) and Sūkṣma (subtle). Sūkṣma, or supersensuous, is Thy sound-body (मन्त्रमयं देहम्); Sthūla is meditation on Thy image, which is made up of hands, feet, etc. Thy Sūkṣmarūpa (subtle form) is the Jñānamaya (conscious) body of Prakṛti. O Maheśvari! The supersensuous seldom arises in the mind; therefore one should concentrate his mind on the Sthūla form and attain Mokṣa (liberation).”

The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says:

“Dhyāna is of two kinds, Sarūpa (having visible image) and Arūpa (not having visible image). Thy Arūpa Dhyāna is beyond the cognizance of speech and mind; it is unmanifested, all-pervading, incapable of being pointed out as ‘this’ or ‘that’. Yogīs alone can cognize it by long Samādhi (ecstasy). I relate to you Sthūla Dhyāna, so that Sādhakas being hopeful of Sūkṣma Dhyāna may practise it by fixing the mind upon it for the attainment of the object of their desire.”

In the Dawn-Sandhyā the Divine Mother must be contemplated in the root-lotus as the Creative Power, symbolized by a maiden having a string of beads in Her right hand and a jar filled with water in Her left, riding on a white swan. The white swan is the Hamsa of philosophy, the vital Power which must needs be Her vehicle for the purpose of creation, for without the vital power creation is impossible. The string of beads symbolizes Japa—that is, meditation on the creation of the previous Kalpa and production of similar sound-forms, which are the substratum of all things sensuous and supersensuous. The jar of water is the “cause-water” (कारणवारि) of philosophy, the protoplasm out of which all bodies are formed.

In the Noon-Sandhyā She rides on the King of Birds, Garuḍa, in the heart-lotus, holding in Her four hands conch, discus, mace, and lotus, and wearing a garland of flowers on Her breast. Garuḍa is light (which is life as well), the conch is sound, the discus is Avidyā or that Power by which creation comes; the mace is the symbol of authority, and the lotus

nourishes the universe. The garland of flowers symbolizes the countless beings whom She nourishes. The explanations of the symbols given in this and the preceding and succeeding paragraphs are my own. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata explains the garland as meaning Māyā, the mace as denoting the vital Power, the conch as meaning water, the discus as symbolizing light, and the lotus as symbolizing Ananta, or space.

In the Evening-Sandhyā She rides the Great Bull (महावृषः) in the white lotus holding a trident in Her right hand and a noose (पाशः) in the left. When the day of Brahmā—that is, a Kalpa—comes to a close the bifurcated male and female Powers again meet in equilibrium. This is symbolized by the trident. The noose is Avidyā, which She has withdrawn into Her own hand to repose there until the darkness of Brahmā's night is dispelled.

As Creator Her vehicle is Rājasik, as Preserver it is Sāttvik, and as Withdrawer of the universe it is Trigūṇa Māyā,¹ the Tāmasik Guṇa predominating. The creative energy is volition (इच्छाशक्तिः) the preservative energy is action (क्रियाशक्तिः), and the destructive energy is cognition (ज्ञानशक्तिः). These three phases of the all-pervading Śakti must be contemplated on day by day in order that the Sādhaka may realize what the object of his worship is in manifestation.

The image of the Iṣṭadevatā must first be formed in the mind by Dhyāna. Then the Bija mantra should be repeated, keeping the image in view and withdrawing the mind from all other thoughts. This is called Japa.

यस्य यस्य च मन्त्रस्य उद्दिष्टा या च देवता ।

चिन्तयित्वा तदाकारं मनसा जपमाचरेत् ॥

भूतशुद्धितन्त्रम् ।

तन्निष्ठस्तद्गतप्राणस्तच्चित्तस्तत्परायणः ।

तत्पदार्थानुसंधानं कुर्वन्मन्त्रं जपेत् प्रिये ॥

कुलार्णवतन्त्रम् ।

The Bhūtaśuddhi Tantra says:

“Meditating on the form of the Devatā denoted by the Mantra, Japa should be made in the mind.”

The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

“A mantra should be repeated with faith, devotion, attention, submission, and perception of the Divine image in the mind.”

Japa is of three kinds: Vācika (by audible words), Upāṅśa (lips and tongue moving, but inaudible to the person making Japa), and Mānasika

(mental; lips and tongue not moving). Japa has the supreme virtue of gradually withdrawing the mind from other thoughts and impressions, and fixing it on the Divine image. When concentration by this means is perfected, the consciousness of the Sādhaka is transferred to the Mantra-devatā. This is called Mantra-caitanya (awakening of Mantra) and the Sādhaka is said to have become Mantra-siddha (Mantra-perfect).

It will thus be seen that Sandhyā is of the highest efficacy in spiritual culture, and it is on this account that it is obligatory on every Hindu of whatever division of worshippers he be. I have already quoted from the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the scripture of the Vaiṣṇavas, to show the importance of Prāṇāyāma and Sandhyā. Other quotations from the same Śāstra follow:

“One who is desirous of cutting the bondage of I-am-ness of the Jīvātma should worship Keśava according to the Tāntrik method, which contains in it the Vaidik method as well”.

The man who in this wise worships Īśvara in Agni, Sūrya, water, etc., or in one's own heart, as the Ātmā, according to the Tāntrik Karmayoga, soon attains Mukti (liberation).”

Skandha XI, chap. iii

“O Uddhava! visiting My image and other symbol, visiting My Bhakta (devotee), . . . Dikṣā, according to the Vedas and the Tantras . . . these are the signs of Bhakti (devotion) to Me.”

Skandha XI, chap. xi

“My worship is of three kinds: Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed. Whichever of these three be to one's liking, let him worship Me by that.”

Skandha XI, chap. xxvii

“Śaunaka said: O Sūta, you are devoted to Bhagavān, you know all the doctrines of Tantra and many other things. I now ask you a question. Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Śrī, is only Cidghana (massive consciousness), but Tāntrik Upāsakas (worshipper), at the time of worship, attribute limbs, and these and other parts, such as Garuḍa, etc., weapons such as Sudarśana, and ornaments such as Kaustubha, to Him. Tell me what things (Tattvas) are symbolized by them. I am desirous of knowing Kṛyā yoga.¹ Therefore, relate to me that skill in Kriyā (action) by which men attain Mukti (liberation). Sūta said: Saluting my Gurudeva, I relate to you the Vibhūti² of Viṣṇu as stated in the Veda and the Tantra by Brahmā and other Ācāryas (teachers).”

Skandha XII, chap. xi

These and other like statements should induce my Vaiṣṇava brothers, who are too often apt to assail the Tantra, to abstain from the terrible sin of a patricide.

“Antaryāga, or internal worship, gives Mukti (liberation) even to a living Sādhaka. Only Mumukṣus or Munis (sages) bent upon Mukti are entitled to it. The Sādhakas, who are incapable of Antaryāga, should perform it like external Pūjā (worship) with mental offerings.”

Gautamīya Tantra

Antaryāga is based entirely upon a direct knowledge of the Power-centres or Cakras in the human body. The Sādhaka, having awakened Kula-Kuṇḍalinī in the root-chakra, takes Her up, with the help of the vital air, from centre to centre, until the thousand-petalled centre in the crown of the head is reached; there the male and female Powers are brought together in blissful union. The Sādhaka having enjoyed this temporary bliss, which vitalizes his body and mind, transfers his consciousness to the heart-centre, in the ethereal space of which he forms the mental image of the Divine Mother as it is expressed in his Bija-mantra. When the image has been thus formed, the mind is concentrated upon it with firm faith and devotion. When the image is portrayed upon the canvas of the mind with all the details of limbs and organs, as if it were a painting, the Sādhaka offers his sacrifices:

हृत्पद्मासनं दद्यात् सहस्रारच्युतामृतैः ।

पाद्यं चरणयोर्दद्यान्मनसार्धं निवेदयेत् ॥

तेनामृतेनाचमनं स्नानीयमपि कल्पयेत् ।

आकाशतत्त्वं वसनं गन्धं तु गन्धतत्त्वकम् ॥

चित्तं प्रकल्पयेत् पुष्पं धूपं प्राणान् प्रकल्पयेत् ।

तेजस्तत्त्वं च दीपार्थं नैवेद्यं च सुधांबुधिम् ॥

अनाहतध्वनिं घण्टां वायुतत्त्वं च चामरम् ।

नृत्यमिन्द्रियकर्माणि चाञ्चल्यं मनसस्तथा ॥

पुष्पं नानाविधं दद्यादात्मनो भावसिद्धये ।

अमायामनहंकारमरागममदं तथा ॥

अमोहकमदम्भं च अद्वेषाक्षोभके तथा ।

अमात्सर्यमलोभं च दशपुष्पं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥

अहिंसा परमं पुष्पं पुष्पमिन्द्रियनिग्रहम् ।

दयाक्षमाज्ञानपुष्पं पञ्चपुष्पं ततः परम् ॥

इति पञ्चदशैर्पुष्पैर्भावपुष्पैः प्रपूजयेत् ॥

“Give the heart lotus as a gift to the Divine Mother.”

(Manas) as Arghya (offering). For washing the face and for bathing give the same nectar. Give ether (Ākāśa) as clothing; the principle of smell for odour; the mind (Citta) for flower; the vital airs (Prāṇas) as incense; the principle of light (Tejas) as the lamp; the ocean of nectar for food; the sound called Anāhata (inaudible sound in the heart-lotus) as the bell (ghaṇṭā); the principle of air as fan and fly whisk (Cāmara); the actions of the senses, as well as the restlessness of the mind, as dancing. For the realization of divine thought give diverse flowers: freedom from delusion, egotism, attachment, spiritual insensibility, pride, arrogance, enmity, perturbation, envy, and greed—freedom from all these are called the ten flowers. The supreme flower of Ahimsā (non-injury of any living thing), the flower of subjugation of the senses and the flowers of pity, forgiveness, and knowledge—these are the five flowers. With these fifteen flowers formed of sentiments (bhāvas) should a worship be performed.”

After offering this mental sacrifice to his Iṣṭadevatā standing before his mental eye in the heart-lotus, the Sādhaka makes mental japa :

माला वर्णमयी प्रोक्ता कुण्डलीसूत्रयन्त्रिता

“The rosary is said to be formed of Varnas, or sound-powers, strung together by the thread Kuṇḍalī.”

The fifty severed heads of men which make up the necklace of Mother Kālī must be replaced mentally by the fifty sound Powers (Varnas), strung together by Kulakuṇḍalinī as thread, and the Bija Mantra is repeated with the help of this rosary. He then performs mental Homa.

The Nityā Tantra says:

ज्ञानहोमविधिं वक्ष्ये शृणु सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरि ।
यस्य विज्ञानमात्रेण कर्ता हर्ता सदाशिवः ॥
आत्मेति चतुरश्रं तु विचिन्त्य वीरवन्दिते ।
आत्मान्तरात्मा परमज्ञानात्मा परमेश्वरि ।
चतुर्भिरेतैर्देवेशि कुर्यात्तु चतुरश्रकम् ॥
अर्धमात्रां योनिरूपां कुण्डमध्ये विचिन्तयेत् ।
आनन्दं मेखलां कुर्यात् त्रिरेखाबलयस्तथा ॥
ज्ञानमिं तत्र देवेशि योजयेत् कुलभैरवः ।
शब्दाख्यं मातृकारूपं संविदाम्नौ ततो हुनेत् ॥
अक्षराणीह मे देवि निःशब्दं ब्रह्म जायते ॥
पुण्यं पापं विकल्पं च संकल्पं वीरवन्दिते ।

चिन्तयेन्मूलविद्यां च जुहुयान्मनसा श्रुत्वा ।

तदा संविन्मयः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्मपदं व्रजेत् ॥

“O All-beautiful One! I tell you the ritual of Jñāna-homa (homa of knowledge), give ear unto me. By knowing it one becomes Sadāśiva, the Creator and Destroyer. The quadrangular Vēdi (altar) is made of Ātmā (individual soul), Antarātmā (the manifested God), Paramātmā (the Divine Mother), and Jñānātmā (the Absolute). The Ardhamātrā (Kuṇḍalinī) should be considered the Yoni of the Homa-pit; the Mekhalā of the Vēdi (altar), that is to say, the line which encircles it as if by a waist-chain, should be thought of as consisting of Ānanda (bliss); and the other three lines on the Vēdi should be taken as its three Balis, that is to say, beauty-lines on the abdomen. The Kula-bhairava—that is the Yogī—should kindle in it the fire of knowledge (Jñāna); then the forms of the Mātrkā-sounds should be sacrificed in the fire of Jñāna, by which the sounds become Soundless Brahman. O the Adored of Vīras! Merits, demerits, desires, doubts, action, inaction and Prakṛti should be sacrificed by the mental spoon. Thus one becomes full of Jñāna, and Parabrahman Itself.”

From the above description of subjective Upāsana, it will have been seen that only such highly developed Yogīs and devotees are capable of it as have attained Samprajñāta Samādhi, or Temporary Communion, in which the knower and the known are distinguished. It is the last stage of Upāsana, a thin veil only separating the individual Ātmā from the universal Ātmā. Such Yogīs are the product of ages of culture.

Sādhakas, whose mental image is not so well defined and who cannot make it steady for any length of time, must form an objective image, exactly in the likeness of the subjective image, and worship their Iṣṭadevatā in it. They must, however perform mental Upāsana first as best as they can, and then vitalize and energize the external image. By establishing a magnetic current between himself and the image before him, the mentally vitalized image is communicated to it. The external image is no longer a mere doll; it is the Iṣṭadevatā Herself. Between the Sādhaka's faith and will, on the one side, and his Mantra-power, on the other, a change, so to say, takes place in the inanimate image. It is Mantra-śakti which is alone capable of performing this wonderful change and of rendering worship in images possible.

The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

गवां सर्वाङ्गजक्षीरं स्रवेत् स्तनमुखात् यथा ।

आभिरूपाच्च बिम्बस्य पूजायां च विशेषतः ।

साधकस्य च विश्वासाद्देवतासंनिधिर्भवेत् ॥

कुलार्णवतन्त्रम् ।

“As milk, which is produced in every limb of the cow, flows out through the udders, so the all-pervading Devatā manifests Herself in external images, etc. By the similitude of the external image to the mantrik image, by the speciality of the Pūjā, and by the faith of the Sādhaka, the Devatā manifests himself.”

Prānapraṭiṣṭhā (enlivening) thus accomplished, the Sādhaka worships the Divine Mother, rapt in devotion and love. He has now no great difficulty in concentrating his mind upon the visible Iṣṭadevatā. He makes meditation (Dhyāna) and recitation (Japa) before this living image as long as he is capable of it. He offers flowers, incense, sweet-scents, the choicest eatables, valuable cloths and ornaments to his beloved Mother, who accepts them all. Thus, practising day by day, his restless mind begins gradually to compose itself, finding better and purer happiness in the Lotus Feet of the Divine Mother than in all that the world can offer him. Thus, learning to taste of celestial happiness, true Vairāgya (dispassion) towards worldly happiness engrosses his mind. A man might spend a dozen lives in discrimination as to what is permanent and what is not so, yet Vairāgya would be as far off from him as the mirage in a sandy desert; for, according to Vedānta Nitya-anitya-vicāra, or discrimination between what is permanent and what is transient, does not unfold itself in a mind which has not been purified by worship (Upāsana). To try to be indifferent to worldly happiness without Upāsana is to put the cart before the horse.

The more the mind composes itself by external worship, the more abiding becomes the mental image. When, by this means, the state of Samādhi, or ecstasy, is reached, the external image is no longer required.

After finishing his worship, the Sādhaka, by a process known as Samhāramudrā, withdraws the vitality communicated to the image, which then becomes a mere material image, fit to be thrown away.

External Upāsana is not mere prayer and praise and offering of food and drink. The Bhakta's (devotee's) mind cannot rest satisfied without singing the praise of his beloved Mother; the more he sings Her praise, the more his mind is elevated towards Her. The Mantra-power helps him to make his offerings acceptable. In the Gītā the Lord says that he accepts flowers, leaves, etc., offered to Him with Bhakti (devotion). But

the image through which He is worshipped are *en rapport*? The Tantra here steps in and solves the question. Prayer, praise, and offerings apart, the most important features of Upāsana are: (1) Bhūtaśuddhi (purification of the elements constituting the subtle body). (2) Nyāsa (the placing of the Mātrkā sounds and Bija Mantras on different parts of the body). (3) Prāṇāyāma, or breath control. (4) Meditation (Dhyāna). (5) Mental worship. (6) Japa, or recitation of Mantra. The first is accomplished either by Yoga process or by means of a particular Mantra. The object of this is to purify the mind of its good and evil tendencies which have rendered the Ego a body-bound, selfish, small thing. The worshipper, in doing this purificatory rite, must think that, for the time being, his Kārmik body has been purified, that he (the true self—that is, Ātmā) now wears the mantle of Kulakuṇḍalinī (the body of the Sound Spiritual) and that, therefore, he is no other than the object of worship himself. Being Deva himself, he worships Deva, thus realizing the Vaidik saying:

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्मविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणाहुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

भगवद्गीता ।

“Brahman the oblation, Brahman the clarified butter, are offered in Brahman the fire by Brahman; unto Brahman verily shall he go who in his action meditates wholly upon Brahman.”

The object of the second rite (Nyāsa) is to render the body spiritualized by the sound and Mantra Powers.

The rest (3, 4, 5, and 6) have been dealt with in their proper places.

It is by spiritualizing the body and the mind, and by devoutly thinking himself to be a part of the Unity, that a Sādhaka must perform his worship, which is, in fact, more subjective than objective. Without these essentials, Upāsana would be like royalty without territory. To withdraw the mind from external attractions and repulsions and to consecrate it to the Divine Mother, Prāṇāyāma, Dhyāna, and Japa are essential.

Upāsana has many subsidiary elements in it, upon which it is not necessary here to dwell, as they are not likely to interest the general reader; they are, however, all-important, and should not be eliminated by an earnest Sādhaka from his Sādhana.

Hindu society has been so constituted by the Ṛṣis of Vaidik antiquity that it is not enough that every member of it is a good citizen. One should not only be a good citizen, but a good individual; and not only a good individual, but a God-loving individual withal. Such

Caste is not only a civil rule, but a religious ordinance as well. Society was so framed that it worked automatically to supply the material and spiritual wants of its members. Hindu society being thus constituted, every member of it is bound to be initiated, either according to his own choice, or according to the form of religion of his ancestors. The Hindus are generally either Vaiṣṇavas or Śāktas. The mode of Upāsana, briefly sketched above, is too high for the average Śākta Hindu, who must practise Sandhya and Upāsana with devotion and faith, so that in the long run he may be prepared for the path.

Spiritual self-culture, is pre-eminently Sāttvik.¹ The passions, propensities, attachments, aversions and all those creations of Rajas and Tamas² which chain man down to earth and to things earthly, must be gradually but effectually washed off and the mind rendered perfectly Sāttvik. The Upāsana, above described, is Sāttvik in all its forms. Those, therefore, who, though governed by the laws of their caste (Varṇa) and stage of life (Āśrama), which is called Varṇāśrama Dharma, yet infringe them, and under cover of religious practice unlawfully eat, drink, and sexually enjoy for the gratification of their senses, are condemned by Śiva in the passage which the author of the Śāktānanda Taraṅgiṇī quotes from the Āgamasamhitā on the subject of false Tantras (Asadāgama):

कलौ प्रायेण देवेशि राजसास्तामसास्तथा ।
निषिद्धाचरणाः सन्तो मोहयन्त्यपरान् बहून् ॥
आवाभ्यां पिशितं रक्तं सुरां चैव सुरेश्वरि ।
वर्णाश्रमोचितं धर्ममविचार्यापर्यन्ति ये ।
भूतप्रेतपिशाचास्ते भवन्ति ब्रह्मराक्षसाः ॥

इति असदागमस्य निन्दामाह शिवः ।

“O Devī! in the Kali Yuga most of the Rājāsik and Tāmasik people, having adopted prohibited practices, delude many others. O Sureśvarī! those who, regardless of Varṇāśrama Dharma, offer us flesh, blood, and wine, are (various forms of) evil spirits.”³

I believe, however, that more than half of Hindu India is Śākta, and I can safely assert that 90 per cent of them are free from reproach in respect of the violation of true Śāstric principles and practice.

¹ The outcome of the Sattva guṇa (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

² See as to these guṇas, *ibid*.

³ See as to this passage the remarks in the Introduction by Arthur Avalon

THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE HUMAN EGO

एषोऽन्तरात्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यो यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।

प्राणैश्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवत्येष आत्मा ॥

मुण्डकोपनिषत् ।

In the above quotation from the Muṇḍakopaniṣad it is said:

“ This subtle Paramātmā can only be known by the mind, within the body, where the five vital airs reside. The minds of all are pervaded by the vital airs. The Paramātmā manifests Himself in the mind when it is purified.”

The Ego must clothe itself with eight millions of bodies, from the stone to the animal, before it can be fit to assume the human form. There is, however, no knowing how many births and rebirths in each class of bodies it must undergo before it can adapt itself to the next higher body. Ages untold and births unnumbered at last usher the journeying Ego into the human body—the most perfect of all bodies cognizable by the senses. The Ego itself is but a body, a Sūkṣma Śarīra—that is, a subtle body, consisting of the vital airs, the sensorium, and the mind. This bundle of very fine “matter,” unlike its gross sheath, which decomposes and decays at short intervals, persists from the creation to the final dissolution of the universe. It has a causal body (Kāraṇa Śarīra) within itself, which is composed of a homogeneous finer “matter”. The experiences of countless births and re-births are stored up in the subtle body, and very fine impressions of those experiences are stamped upon the causal body. The one immutable Ātmā, pervading and containing all existences, is made a captive, as it were, in each subtle body, from which circumstance it acquires its Egoity. The unconditioned Ātmā being thus conditioned, the pleasures and the pains, the happiness and the misery of the body are attributed to it; this is the work of Nature’s great housewife called Avidyā (ignorance). When, however, the Ego acquires the human body, which is the most perfect of Sthūla Śarīras—that is, gross bodies—it is blessed with the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to its primeval source, and (dissolving the compact subtle body) of uniting Ātmā with Ātmā. It needs ages of self-culture to accomplish this Paramārtha (supreme object); but a beginning must be made by every human being.

Avidyā, the most expert and cunning housewife, has ten thousand arts and wiles to captivate her children. Like Rassellas, they must not be allowed to peep beyond the lofty ramparts of the happy valley. She has provided every creature comfort for her children. People, charmed by her unceasing attentions, quite forget their real Mother, Vidyā.

To save humanity from their pseudo-mother, Divinity from time to time incarnates and sends His chosen sons to teach them. It is by this means that man acquires the knowledge of his real state, and learns that he has a true Mother, who alone can save him from the glamour of Avidyā.

In this golden land of Divine Ṛṣis, the land whence Divine knowledge radiated to all other lands, the path to Vidyā was made an art and divided into different progressive grades. The curriculum consists of Varṇāśrama Dharma¹ (for full particulars of which the reader is referred to my Bengali book on the subject), external and internal worship, and Yoga. Varṇāśrama Dharma is the ground whereon the first battle must be fought with Avidyā. It is the place where the Ego must put chains around the neck of Avidyā so that she may not lead people wheresoever she may choose. It is here that man gets the first glimpse of his real Mother Vidyā. External worship further girds up the Ego to cope with Avidyā. By these two means the Ego gradually learns to feel that it has a real Father and Mother; to find out, to worship, to love, and to know whom is the end and aim of its being. When the conviction of its necessity grows irresistible, the Ego determines to make the pilgrimage. But where is the grand trunk road over which it must wend its way.

From the text of the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, which opens this section, it will be seen that the Divinity has to be sought within the body of the Sādhaka. Although the Divine Essence is immanent in everything in the Kosmos, the body of the Sādhaka, which is a part of the Kosmos, is the place where he can best find it, for the mind, which has to make the search, and the apparatus, with which the search has to be made, are located in the body; besides, the body is a Microcosm, containing within it the seven centres of Power and the seven presiding Lords mentioned in the second section. The seven centres are seven planes of evolution, and over each plane there is a presiding Deity, who directs and controls its work.

The Universe, according to Tantra, consists of a single Mahābrahmanāṇḍa, or grand universe, and numberless Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍas, or great universes. From the seven planes of the grand universe are evolved innumerable great worlds each one of which is also divided into seven planes. Each planet, each satellite, each star, and every living entity in each world is itself a world in miniature, and has within it the seven centres of Power and the seven presiding Deities.

The Nirvāṇa Tantra says:

“महाब्रह्माण्डमध्ये तु बृहद्ब्रह्माण्डमेव च ।

तन्मध्ये जन्तवो देवि तन्मध्ये भुवनानि च ॥”

“O Devī! within the Mahābrahmāṇḍa is Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa; within it are beings and regions.”

“महाब्रह्माण्डके यद्यत् प्रकारं परमेश्वरि ।

तत्तत् सर्वं हि देवेशि बृहद्ब्रह्माण्डमध्यतः ॥”

“O Parameśvarī! O Devesī! all varieties of beings and things which are in the Mahābrahmāṇḍa are also within the Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa.”

“ब्रह्माण्डास्तत्र जायन्ते लक्षं लक्षं सुलोचने ।”

“O beautiful-eyed one! hundreds of thousands of Brahmāṇḍa (universes) are evolved within it (Mahābrahmāṇḍa).”

A vivid description of Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa is given in the same Tantra. But as it is very long, I am reluctantly compelled to resist the temptation to quote it. I shall, however, place before the reader its salient points. The Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa, or Macrocosm, has its Meru or vertebral column extending longitudinally from top to bottom. At the top is situated Satya Loka, and at the bottom Avīci. Between Satya Loka and Avīci lie the other six Lokas (worlds or regions) and the other six nether regions altogether making up fourteen Bhuvanas or regions. Within the Meru reside the Gods—that is, the Powers which preside over the fourteen Bhuvanas. The centres of Power within the Meru are:

1. Ādhāra¹ Cakra, which is also called Brahma-Padma (Brahma-lotus). It is just above the seven nether regions. The element earth is within its anther. The seat of Kāma (desire) is there. Within the seat of Kāma is the male Deity, Svayambhū Linga, and the female Deity, Kulakuṇḍalinī. The Creator Brahmā resides in the element earth. His female Consort is called Sāvitrī. This is the causal Bhūloka. Here resides the Spiritual Sun.

2. Bhīma Padma, or lotus, or Śvādhiṣṭhāna Cakra. The element water is within its anther. Viṣṇu resides here with His consort. It is the causal Bhuvārloka in which the heaven of Viṣṇu, called Vaikuṇṭha, is situated. On the right of Vaikuṇṭha is Goloka, where Viṣṇu assumes the form of a two-handed being with a flute in his hand. Here he is associated with the female Power Rādhikā.

3. Maṇipūra Padma. The element fire is within its anther. Rudra resides here with his consort Bhadrā Kālī. This is the causal Svarloka.

4. Anāhata Padma. The element air is within its anther. Īśvara resides here with his consort Bhuvanēśvarī. Īśvara is the overlord of the three previous Lokas and their Lokapālas—viz., Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. This is the causal Maharloka.

¹ Or Mūlādhāra, as to which and the following cakras, or centres of

5. Viśuddha Padma. The element ether, or Ākāśa, is in its anther. The presiding Deity is half-male and half-female, called Ardhanārīśvara, or Mahāgaurī, and Sadhāśiva, whose Vāhana (carrier) is an animal, which is half-bull and half-lion. This is the causal Jana Loka.

6. Ājñā, or Jñāna Padma. There is no element, but the universal Manas (sensorium) is the seed here. The Deities are Paraśiva and his consort Siddha Kālī. This the causal Tapa Loka. Here resides the Spiritual Moon.

7. Sahasrāra Padma. This is the region of the First cause, the cause of the six previous causes; it is duality in unity described in the second section. This is the Satya Loka.

These are the seven Lokas, or regions, of the Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa.

The reader will note that they are within the Meru. We have heard of a Meru of the earth, a mountain situated just where there is a depression on the orange-shaped planet of ours. This mountain is said to be a hollow, vertical column of stone, which externally holds the earth fast, and internally contains the centres in which the Devas—that is, the presiding septenary Gods—reside. This idea of Meru must be magnified and transferred to the Meru of the Bṛhat Brahmāṇḍa with a view to form a notion of what is meant by it.

It must be noted that the Kosmic Kuṇḍalinī is vehicled by Triguṇā Prakṛti¹ in Satya Loka, where She is called Mahā Kuṇḍalī, and by the eight primary divisions, [earth, water, fire, air, ether, manas (sensorium), Buddhi (mind), and Ahaṅkāra (I-am-ness)], of Prakṛti in Bhūrloka, where She is called Kulakuṇḍalī. The highest and the lowest of the centres of Power are both guarded by Kuṇḍalinī in Her two aspects. As in the Mūlādhāra, so in the Sahasrāra Padma She covers the cleft in the male Power with her hood. She coils up round the Universe with Her tail within Her mouth, having the inverted triangles within Her coils. The Theosophical Society has adopted this symbol from the Tantras. The triangles, as the Tāntrik symbol of the male and the female Divinity, being well known, it is not necessary to quote Tantra to prove it; but as it is not generally known that the serpent lying with its tail within its mouth is a Tāntrik symbol, I quote the following from the Śiva Samhitā:

“पश्चिमाभिमुखी योनिः गुदमेढ्रान्तरालगा ।

तत्र कन्दं समाख्यातं तत्रास्ति कुण्डली सदा ॥

सवेष्ट्य सकला नाडीः सार्धत्रिकुटिलाकृतिः ।

मुखे निवेश्य सा पुच्छं सुषुम्नाविवरे स्थिता ॥”

शिवसंहिता ।

“Between the anus and the generative organ is the Yoni, having its mouth downwards. There is what is called the root. Kuṇḍali is always there. Encircling all the nerves with her body of three and a half coils (and) with her tail in her mouth, She lies within the cavity of the Suṣumnā nerve.”

As the Macrocosm has in its centres of Power, so has the Microcosm. The Nirvāṇa Tantra says:

“ब्रह्मपद्मे पृथिव्यां तु वर्तन्ते मानुषादयः ।
 ते सर्वे देवि ब्रह्माण्डास्तन्मध्ये भुवनानि च ॥
 पातालसप्तकं तत्र तत्रैव स्वर्गसप्तकम् ।
 एवं चक्रे सर्वदेहे भुवनानि चतुर्दश ॥
 प्रतिदेहं परेशानि ब्रह्माण्डं नात्र संशयः ॥”
 निर्वाणतन्त्रम् ।

“Within the Brahma Padma, the earth, are men and other beings. O Devī! they are all worlds, and within them are the regions. Within them are the seven nether regions and the seven heavens. In this manner in all bodies, within the lotuses, are the fourteen regions. O Lady Paramount! verily every body is a Brahmāṇḍa (world).”

The human body is called by the Hindus Bhogāyatna—that is, a mansion wherein the reincarnating Ego is born to reap the fruits of its Prārabdha or Kinetic Karma; but it is also called Brahma-pura, the city of Brahman. Under the Hindu's law of evolution it must be so; for evolution, as I have already pointed out in the previous section is a double parallel motion, one tending downwards and the other tending upwards. Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti, that is the outgoing and return movements are conspicuous everywhere in nature. For the purpose of reaping the fruits of Karma the embodied Ego must come in contact with the outside world, its subjective enjoyments and sufferings having come to an end in heaven and hell. The objective world is the arena where it must battle with the results of its own previous Karma, and generate new Karma in accordance with the Pravṛtti law of nature. To this end it is furnished with a system of nerves, which presides over, controls, and regulates the functions of the other systems—viz., the circulatory system, the respiratory system, the digestive system, the excretory system, the muscular system, and the skeletal system. These nerves are classified into three main groups: (1) Efferent nerves. (2) Afferent nerves. (3) Inter-central nerves.

“Efferent or centrifugal nerves are those which conduct impulses from the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) to other parts of

impulses in the reverse direction—viz., from all parts of the body to the central nervous system.” “Inter-central nerves are those which connect nerve-centres together; they connect different parts of the brain and of the cord to one another.”¹

The Bhogāyatana aspect of the human body is dealt with in the science of Biology, and its Brahmapura aspect in the science of Yoga.

The earth, as a Microcosm, has its Meru, a stony vertical column extending from its northern point of depression to the southern point. It is within the bowels of the earth that the Meru is situated, and the septenary Gods, presiding over the earth, are located inside the Meru. What are known as the north and the south pole are only circumpolar regions of the earth. The human body is a Microcosm as well. Its Meru is the vertebral column of bones extending from the depression, called Brahma-randhra (the hollow of Brahman, where the two halves of the body, like the two hemispheres of the earth, meet) to the anus. This bony column is filled with white and grey matter, wherein are nerves and nerve cells. The principal Yoga nerves are fourteen in number, of which three are prominent—viz., Iḍā, Piṅgalā, and Suṣumnā. Like all other nerves, their root lies in the Yoni—that is, the region between the anus and the generative organ. This region is called the Mūlādhāra Padma. The Suṣumnā nerve is within the cerebro-spinal axis, and extends from the Mūlādhāra Padma to the Sahasrāra Padma, which is in the crown of the head. It is called the Jñāna nerve, the nerve of pure psychosis. The Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nerves are in the periphery of the spinal cord, and starting from the Yoni (the Iḍā from the root of the left testes, and the Piṅgalā from that of the right testes), wind up spirally, meeting the Suṣumnā nerve at five points—viz., the Yoni, the root of the generative organ, the navel, the heart, and the throat. From the throat Piṅgalā makes a circuit of the root of the nose between the two eyebrows and enters the right nostril; the Iḍā, making a similar circuit, enters the left nostril. In this wise an island-like centre is formed at the root of the nose. The five points of contact of the Iḍā and the Piṅgalā nerves with the Suṣumnā nerve are five Padmas, or lotuses, or Cakras, or centres, and the island-like place is another centre, thus making six centres from the Yoni to the root of the nose. Above the sixth centre and below the thousand-petalled lotus are two Padmas, which are described in connection with the sixth. With these two and the thousand-petalled lotus the Padmas, or lotuses, are nine in number. All of them are located within or above the cerebro-spinal axis, which is called the Meru of the human body.

The cause of a thing is called its Prakṛti, and that which arises out of Prakṛti is called Vikṛti. The three principles of Mūlaprakṛti (original

¹ “Handbook of Physiology,” Chap. XV, by W. D. Halliburton,

“material” cause of the universe)—viz., Sattva (spirit-manifestation), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (inertia) are the primary cause of the universe. From these three are evolved eight derivative or secondary causes, which are:

- (1) Mahat, which is also called Buddhi, or intelligence, intuition
- (2) Ahankāra, the sense of separateness, individuality; (3) Manas, the mind in its ordinary sense, including the sensorium, the perceptive, ratiocinative, imaginative, volitional, emotional, and other faculties; (4) Ākāśa (ether)
- (5) Vāyu (air); (6) Tejas (fire); (7) Apas (water); and (8) Kṣiti (earth).

What is called Parāprakṛti in the Bhagavadgītā is *Cit* Power, which has been discussed in the first section. When worlds are evolved, Mūlaprakṛti and Parāprakṛti are united kinetically, and the result is the formation of seven, or rather nine, planes of conscious Powers, corresponding to the one primary cause and the eight secondary causes of the universe. In the human body, which is a miniature universe, these planes or centres of conscious power are:

- (1) Sahasrāra Padma. (2) Nāda Padma. (3) Bindu Padma.
- (4) Ājñā, two-petalled Padma. (5) Viśuddha, sixteen-petalled Padma.
- (6) Anāhata, twelve-petalled Padma. (7) Maṇipūra, ten-petalled Padma.
- (8) Svādhiṣṭhāna, six-petalled Padma. (9) Mūlādhāra, four-petalled Padma.

It may here be noted that the conscious Intelligences from the second plane downwards are sound-powers, emanating from the first cause, the Mahāsūrya (the Grand Sun) of the worlds, whose hallowed mansion is the Sahasrāra Padma, as also that from the fourth to the ninth, the Padmas are petalled by fifty primary sound-powers (see second section). These primary sound-powers are distributed in the Padmas in accordance with esoteric principles of combination of sounds.

Enough has been said in the first section regarding the bifurcation of Śakti into male and female, and there is no necessity to recapitulate it here. Sufficient be it to say that all the conscious powers in the nine Padmas are male and female.

Before entering into a general description of these Padmas, it is to be observed that the nomenclature of the Gods and the Goddesses is according to the religious ideas of the great Sādhakas, who have revealed this most esoteric knowledge for the Supreme good of suffering humanity. The Padmas and their presiding Gods are facts in nature, which a Sādhaka has the privilege to see and to call by whatever names he chooses. Hindus, Mahommedans, Christians, Parsees, Buddhists, nay, agnostics, if they choose, can enter this Yoga path without committing themselves to any particular form of religion. One's own religion, whatever it be, will, if practised through this esoteric path, lead the soul with scientific precision

With a view to put the subject in a clear light before the reader, I shall first divide the nine Padmas into three groups. The first three Padmas constitute the first group, the region of cognition, in which the three cognitive Powers (Jñāna Śaktis) are located. It may be called the region of pure Ideation in which the universe exists potentially. The second three Padmas constitute the second group, the region of action, in which the three active Powers are located. It may be called the region of mind, in which the universe assumes a form more definite, having the vital power, the sensorium, and the mind as its constituents. The third group of Padmas are presided over by the Powers of volition, action, and cognition, in subordination to the former group, who create, sustain, and destroy the fully manifested universe.

At the top of and above the cerebro-spinal axis is the Sahasrāra, and at the bottom the Mūlādhāra Padma. Kuṇḍalinī is at both these points. The Sahasrāra is the Mahāsūrya, the Grand Sun, both kosmically and individually, within whose effulgence Ādyāśakti Mahākālī and Paraśiva are inseparably united. This Power is the First Cause, the Vācaka Śakti of Sādhaka's worship. The First Cause is Saguṇa Brahman, or Brahman with attributes, and contains within it the three Guṇas, the three Powers, and the nine planes in the same manner as a lotus-seed holds within itself the future lotus-tree. In the Mūlādhāra Padma lies the duplicate Sun, which is the effulgence of Kulakuṇḍalinī and Svayambhū Śiva. Brahmā, the creator of names and forms, is there with his consort Sāvitrī. The creative desire or Will, called Kāma, is there also. As there is a hollow on the top of the highest Padma, so is there a cleft on the head of Svayambhū Śiva, which is closed up by Mother Kulakuṇḍalinī, who, coiling round all the nerves at their root and encircling the Śiva, breathes forth the rhythmic vital Power through Idā and Piṅgalā. Like one who sleeps, all Her other functions are apparently at rest; hence She is said to be sleeping. The creative Brahma with his consort Sāvitrī is the conscious Power of earth.

Earth is evolved from water. The preservative Viṣṇu with his consort Rādhā is the conscious Power of water. The centre within which they are located is Svādhiṣṭhāna Padma.

Water is evolved from fire. The destructive Śiva or Rudra with his consort Bhadrakālī is the conscious Power of fire. Their centre is Maṇipūra Padma.

These three Padmas are the three Lokas, Bhū, Bhuvah, and Svah respectively. The re-incarnating Ego takes its recurring births and re-births in these three Lokas.

Higher above, in the heart-lotus, is the region of air, in which are located Īśvara and Īśvarī, the immediate cause of the three lower regions

"As baser things mixed with gold and other metals are removed by burning those metals, so the propensities of the senses are removed by Prāṇāyāma."

Rṣi Patañjali says:

“ततः क्षीयते प्रकाशावरणम् ।”

"From that (viz., by practising Prāṇāyāma) the veil which hides pure knowledge is removed."

Now, it must be distinctly understood that as Prāṇāyāma is Haṭha Yoga, the elimination of the latter from Yoga-practice would be as beneficial to the practiser as the removal of his brain would be to a thinker. Yoga has two divisions, one outer and the other inner. The outer division comprises Yama (control), Niyama (regulation), Āsana (posture), Prāṇāyāma (breath-exercise), and Pratyāhāra (withdrawal), and the inner division comprises Dhāraṇa (concentration), Dhyāna (meditation), and Samādhi (communion). Prāṇāyāma, without which Pratyāhāra or withdrawal of the senses from their objects is impossible, stands at the gate leading from the outer to the inner division. It cannot be avoided if one seriously wishes to practise Yoga. It may here be observed that there is no royal road to Yoga, which is, in fact, nothing less than the complete reversal of the natural order of things in its aspirer. Round after round, from Yama (control) upwards, the aspirer must ascend, fortifying his body and mind with energy and vitality enough to enable him to cope with the nature he has built within himself during myriads of births. The chronic diseases of the body and the mind must first be grappled with by means of Yama (control) and Niyama (regulation), which include among other things continence and worship. When the mind is full of faith and devotion, and the body is buoyant, due to the conservation of virile energy, it is then that the aspirer must perfect his postures (āsanas), which help him materially in regulating his breath.

Purification of nerves (dealt with in the fifth section) is the next step to be taken. The nerves, in their natural state, are covered with impurities, which must be removed before commencing Prāṇāyāma. To accomplish this there are available two alternative processes. The first is by inspiration (Pūraka), retention (Kumbhaka), and expiration (Recaka) of breath upon a regulated scale and with the repetition of certain Bija Mantras. The second is altogether physical, and is known by the name of Śaṭkarma (six practices)¹—that is, Dhauti (washing), Vasti (contraction and expansion of the anus), Neti (cleansing of nostrils and throat by thread), Lauliki (pendulum-like motion of the stomach)

Kapālabhāti (inspiration and expiration of air, etc.). The second alternative method is not mentioned in the Śiva Samhitā. It need not be practised by a real aspirant who has no physical infirmity or disease to obstruct his Sādhana. One of these—viz., Trāṭaka—however, is practised by those who are very loud in their denunciation of Haṭha Yoga. In consideration of the physical and mental temperament of his Śiṣya, the Guru must decide which of the six modes of physical culture should be given him along with the first method, which is absolutely necessary. It generally happens that almost all the six modes are dispensed with.

Here I must warn the reader that mere physical culture, such as Āsana, Śaṭkarma, and Prāṇāyāma, are of little avail unless they are accompanied with other practices of Sādhana. We daily meet pseudo-sannyāsīs and athletes who exhibit for a few pice their skill in such physical feats, and even levitation. They may accompany spiritual self-culture, but by themselves they are nothing.

Having purified his nerves, the Sādhaka must practise Prāṇāyāma, the object of which is to suspend breathing for a considerable time without feeling the least uneasiness in respect of this reversal of the ordinary respiratory law of Nature. This is called Kumbhaka; and when that is attained, it is then that real Yoga begins. For those who are physically or otherwise unfit to practise Kumbhaka by the inspiration (Pūraka) and expiration (Recaka) method, other methods are laid down in the Yoga Śāstra.

To awaken Kulakuṇḍalinī is the first grand work achieved through long practised Kumbhaka. In the Mūlādhāra Cakra Her vital sheath sends out, through the Idā and Piṅgalā nerves, an incessant centrifugal and centripetal energy, which draws in and drives out the atmospheric air. It is said that the range of the vital energy thus sent out extends to nine inches without the nostrils. This output of the vital energy has, by voluntary effort by means of Kumbhaka to be withdrawn. When Kumbhaka is of sufficiently long duration, the vital energy, being no longer able to act and re-act upon atmospheric air, rebounds upon the vital sheath itself, thus producing an abnormal action, not only upon the vital sheath, but on the space in the vicinity occupied by potential fire. When those two Nature's finer forces, allied together, impinge upon the vital sheath, the mind, ever sensitive to abnormal actions of the body, forthwith repairs to the spot, and makes its first acquaintance with its real Mother, Kulakuṇḍalinī. Kulakuṇḍalinī is thus aroused from Her apparent slumber, and the Ego finds itself at the lotus-feet of its long-lost Mother. The glamour of its stepmother, Avidyā, for the time being vanishes, and the Ego—the reincarnating Jīva of millions of births and sufferings—implores the arms of its ever-gracious loving Mother.

But the accomplishment of this end by the ordinary process of

as nothing within the body can be cognized without concentration, it is clear that Bhṛgu practised Rāja Yoga for the acquisition of Brahmajñāna (spiritual knowledge). The Sheaths are five in number—viz.:

(1) Annamaya Kośa (the Sheath of food). (2) Prāṇamaya Kośa (the Sheath of life). (3) Manomaya Kośa (the Sheath of lower mind). (4) Vijñānamaya Kośa (the Sheath of higher mind). (5) Ānandamaya Kośa (the Sheath of bliss).

According to my view, these Kośas are mentioned to indicate the causes from which they arise, for Yoga is practised in the lotuses or centres of Power through the Suṣumnā nerve. There is no difference of opinion on this point. That Brahmajñāna cannot be acquired without Yoga, and that Rāja Yoga is the most potent means to acquire it, is conceded by the Commentators and indicated in the Upaniṣads themselves. Even in the Taittirīyopaniṣad the lotuses are broadly hinted at thus:

“स य एषोऽन्तर्हृदय आकाशः । तस्मिन्नयं पुरुषो मनोमयः । अमृतो हिरण्मयः
अन्तरेण तालुके । य एष स्तन इवावलम्बते । सेन्द्रयोनिः । यत्रासौ केशान्तो
विवर्तते ।”

तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत्

“Within the heart (lotus) is an ethereal space, in which the immortal, resplendent Lord of mind resides. The path of Brahman lies within the hanging breast-shaped thing (cranium) at the crest of the head where the hairs divide.”

The centres of Power are the causes from which the five Sheaths arise. Bhṛgu, by practising Yoga in those centres, gradually discovered the Sheaths. His first discovery was the Annamaya Kośa, which arises from the elements—earth, water, and fire. Earth and water produce food, which is assimilated by fire and converted into the substance which forms the body it nourishes. Earth, water, and fire, being the presiding elements in Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, and Maṇipūra centres respectively, they became the objects of Bhṛgu's concentration in the first place; because, by awakening Kulakuṇḍalinī the Sādhaka first meets Mūlādhāra, then Svādhiṣṭhāna, and then Maṇipūra.

The Prāṇamaya Kośa arises from Anāhata and Viśuddha centres, in which vital air and Ākāśa respectively preside.

The Manomaya Kośa is evolved from the Ājñā centre, which is the centre of mind.

From the Bindu and Nāda Cakras arises the Vijñānamaya Kośa. And undifferentiated Prakṛti in the Sahasrārā is the cause of the

of power in accordance with the Rājayoga system. In fact, there are only two systems of self-culture mentioned in the Hindu Śāstras—viz., Bhakti Yoga (Path of Faith and Love) and Jñāna Yoga (Path of the Eight-limbed Yoga). As the Upaniṣads are the science of Jñāna (knowledge), it is plain that Bhakti Yoga is not meant to be the instrument of culture for cognizing the Kośas. I have touched upon the Kośas to impress upon the minds of the public which reads the Upaniṣads the fact that in self-culture the path of knowledge is but one, and that that path is the Eight-limbed Yoga.

I will conclude with a few observations on self-culture by Faith and Love (Bhakti Yoga) and self-culture by knowledge (Jñāna Yoga). The path, which begins with the suppression of breath (Kumbhaka) and ends in the realization of the unconditioned, immutable Brahman, is no doubt the high road to perfect knowledge; but it is a long, tedious, and trying journey, which very few are physically and mentally capable of accomplishing. Many aspirants, indeed break down, and many succumb. One who is desirous of following this path should undertake it early in youth if he be physically and morally strong enough to pass through the rigid ordeals to which a neophyte is subjected by the Gurus who follow the Vaidik method of Yoga-training. I have heard it said by a venerable personage, who is reputed to be an eminent Yogī and a great Sanskrit scholar, that successful Yoga-culture is not possible unless pursued according to the Tāntrik method, which renders the otherwise bleak prospect cheerful to the neophyte, and buoys him up with strength and courage commensurate with the arduous task he has undertaken. Very few, indeed, are there who are physically and morally fit for, and who have the opportunity to devote their life almost entirely to, the pursuit of Jñāna Yoga. Besides, the Hindu scriptures insist upon the culture of the Path of Faith and Love as the initial stage through which an aspirant must pass before he is fit to undertake the Path of Knowledge.

Of the Eight-limbed Yoga, Niyama (Regulation) is the second limb, in which Īśvarapraṇidhāna—that is, worship of God—is the most prominent feature. It will, therefore, be seen that to eliminate the first and second limbs and begin with the third is a violation of the scheme of self-culture laid down in the Śāstras, the effect of which cannot but be disaster.

When the fiery path of Jñāna Yoga, dwelt upon in this section, is fit for but a few, the milky way of Bhakti Yoga, which is the subject of the previous one, is open to all—to the young and the old, the weak and the strong, and to the man of business who has not much time to spare for the systematic pursuit of Jñāna Yoga. Bhakti Yoga carries the aspirant slowly but surely through the eddy of the world to that bourn where

intermediate beings can never hope to attain liberation from the sorrow and pains of the world. Even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are perishable. Allegiance even to Them is not beyond the grip of Māyā. The fate of such worshippers is thus summarized in the Bhagavadgīta:

“Those who worship the Devas go to the Devas; to the Pitṛs (ancestors) go the Pitṛ-worshippers; to the Bhūtas (spirits) go those who sacrifice to Bhūtas; but My worshippers come unto Me.”—Chap. ix, verse 25.

The Kulārṇava Tantra thus admonishes unwise men:

ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेशादिदेवता भूतजातयः

नाशमेवानुधावन्ति तस्माच्छ्रेयः समाश्रयेत् ॥

“Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśa, and other Devatās, being within the category of ‘matter’ (Bhūta), are hastening towards destruction. Hence do what is right.”

What is right (Śreya) is distinguished from what is dear (Preya) in that the thing dear, though honey for the time being, is venom in the long run; whereas what is right is unsavoury in the beginning, but is ambrosia in the end. The Tantra Śāstra holds that the right conduct of man is to identify himself with what is unperishable and perennial Bliss and to forego all objects of desire, however sweet they may be, as so many binding chains added to the already numerous heavy bonds which bind the *Kārmic* body.

The Tantras, like the Vedas, while laying down the Upāsana worship of hosts of Devas and Devīs for unwise men, who cannot overcome their cherished Vāsanā (desires) for present and but short-lived future happiness, proclaims the Upāsana of the “One-without-a-second” Brahman, and explains in detail how that supreme good may be attained.

The manifested aspect of Brahman is the object of worship. The Kathopaniṣad describes the Manifested Brahman thus:

यः पूर्वं तपसो जातमद्भ्यः पूर्वमजायत ।

गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तं यो भूतेभिर्व्यपश्यत । एतद्वै तत् ।

या प्राणेन संभवति अतिर्देवतामयी ।

गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तीं या भूतेभिर्व्यजायत । एतद्वै तत् ।

“He, who was, by meditation, the first-born before the creation of the five elements, who resides in the hollow of the hearts of beings, and is in all causes and effects. He who perceives Him in this manner perceives

“She, who was born as Prāṇa (the ‘One Life’), in whom are all Devatās, who is Aditi (eater of the five elements), who resides in the hollow of the heart, is in all causes and effects. He who perceives in this manner perceives the Absolute Brahman in Her.”—Kāṭhōpaniṣad, Chap. iv, verses 6 and 7.

The Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad opens with the query, What is the cause of the universe and all that is contained in it? The answer to this question is given in the following verse:

ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन् देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणैर्निनूढाम्

“Immersed in concentration and meditation they found the Power (Śakti) which is the cause of the universe¹ to be lying hidden by Her own ‘Guṇas’” (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas).—Chap. i, verse 3.

Reading between the lines, the truth is patent that the manifested Brahman is Śakti, and that Śakti, though one and indivisible, has dual action in cosmogenesis, and is therefore expressed in terms masculine and feminine, to explain, however indirectly, the idea of Divine causation in human language. The manifested Brahman being essentially the same as the unmanifested Absolute Brahman, Śakti, when unmanifested is Cit (pure consciousness), and when manifested, is Cit with Māyā or Prakṛti, which is the material cause of the Universe, and which is the “own attribute or guṇa” (स्वगुण) of Śakti.

The Tāntrika View of Śakti is exactly the same, as has been explained already in an earlier portion of this essay. In Sarvasāmrājyamedhā Stotra of Dakṣiṇākālī the following very clear statement is to be found:

महानिर्गुणरूपा च वाचातीता पराकला ।

कीडायां संस्थिता देवी शून्यरूपं प्रकल्पयेत् ॥

सृष्टेरारंभकार्ये तु दृष्टाच्छाया तथा यदा ।

इच्छाशक्तिस्तु सा जाता तथा काले विनिर्मितः ॥

(The word छाया in the above is thus explained in Brahmayāmala: देवीशक्तिरियं छाया ब्रह्मदेहाविर्निर्गता । “This Chhāyā is Devī-Śakti emerged from the body of Brahman.”)

The above four lines may be thus rendered:

“The ineffable Superior Power is supremely attributeless (that is, Absolute). This Devī (Power), being playful, imagined forms in Śūnya²

¹ The phrase देवात्मशक्ति means देवाह्वना ईश्वररूपेण अवस्थितां शक्तिम् । commentary of Śaṅkarāchārya.

² “The soundless Sat-cit-ānanda Brahman is called Śūnya” (Yogasvaro-

(that is, in the Absolute). In the initial work of creation, when She saw Chhâyā, then She became the Power of Volition, and by Her Mahākāla was created."

Duality in unity is the characteristic of the Tāntrik doctrine, and all its methods of worship are based upon this truth. The Kulārṇava says:

अद्वैतं केचिदिच्छन्ति द्वैतमिच्छन्ति चापरे ।

मम तत्त्वं विजानन्तो द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जिताः ॥

"Some wish (me to be) Advaita (non-dual), and others wish (me to be) Dvaita (dual). He who knows me in essence is free from both Dvaita and Advaita."

The Sādhaka who realizes Duality in the "one-without-a-second" Brahman liberates himself from the bondage of Māyā. He is a true knower of Brahman; he is a true Kaula.

शून्यं तु सच्चिदानन्दं निःशब्दब्रह्मशब्दितम् ।

कुलं तु ब्रह्मशक्तिः स्यादकुलं ब्रह्म चोच्यते ।

कुलाकुलात्मतत्त्वज्ञः कुलीनः स च कथ्यते ॥

"Kula is the Power of Brahman; Akūla is called Brahman; he who knows Ātmā to be essentially Kūla and Akūla is called Kulīna."—Kulārṇava Tantra.

As in Kosmic creation Śakti becomes Nāda and Bindu—Śakti and Śiva—so does Śakti become male and female in individual creation, the male principle existing in the smallest degree in the female, and the female principle existing in the smallest degree in the male. These two great principles, which are ever in association in every act of creation, sustentation, and dissolution, are never divorced from each other, but are ever inseparably connected, though the predominance of the one or the other in objects present the spectacle of apparent separation.

It is Śakti alone which can save a Sādhaka from the quagmire of the senses and their objects and lead him on to the blessed abode of Brahmānanda (Brahman as Bliss). The individuality of a person is but the resultant of his feeling and emotions, ideas and thoughts in relation to the objective world, which he has experienced in thousands of births and rebirths, and which bind him down to the world and its objects. The dissolution of his physical body translates him into a region of temporary subjective happiness or misery, but as sure as the sun rises from the east, he must again pass into the mother's womb, there suffer untold misery; and thence issuing into the world, must there for a brief span of time be tossed

and there is no escape therefrom unless he can extricate himself from the grip of Avidyā (nescience), the charming syren of worldly bondage, and take refuge at the holy feet of vidyā (knowledge). Vidyā alone can make a Sādhaka the master of himself, and the conqueror of the elements, the senses, and the mind.

या विद्या सा महामाया सा तु सेव्या सदा बुधैः ।

योऽविद्यामुपासते सोऽयं तमः प्रविशति ॥

“Vidyā is Mahāmāyā, She should be served by the wise; he who worships Avidyā enters the region of darkness.”—Śaktānanda Taraṅgiṇī.

How Śakti became Śabdabrahman has been previously described. Śakti, when manifested, is Prāṇa, the one intelligent, all powerful, creative vital principle:

आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते । यथैषा पुरुषे च्छायैतस्मिन्नेतदातं, मनः
कृतेनायात्यस्मिन्शरीरे ।

“From the Ātmā this Prāṇa is born. As shadow is to the body, so is Prāṇa associated with Ātmā; it comes to this body by the action of the mind.”¹—Praśnopaniṣad, verse 32.

Hiraṇyagarbha or Prāṇa is called the ‘First-born’ in the Upaniṣads. We have seen that Hiraṇyagarbha and Aditi are one and the same, and that Aditi is what the Tantra called Śakti. We have also seen that Śakti as Kulakuṇḍalinī is the Mother of Universes, whose Breath is life. The fifty Mātṛkā sounds, which form Her body, are Prāṇik principles, from which universes are evolved, by which they are sustained, and into which they are disintegrated. “Sound” and Prāṇa are univocal terms:

नादः प्राणं च जीवं च घोषश्चेत्यादि कथ्यते ।

“(Sound) is called Nāda, Prāṇa, Jīva, Ghoṣa, etc.”—Prapañcasāra, 4th Paṭala.

In Rudrayāmala, quoted by the author of Prāṇatoṣiṇi Kulakuṇḍalinī, is called वायुरूपां मूलाम्बुजस्थिताम्—“of aerial form, located in the Mūlādhāra Cakra.”

The knowledge of Śakti as Prāṇa is of vital importance in spiritual self-culture. The Praśnopaniṣad thus summarizes the result of such knowledge:

¹ Karma which works is Samskāra, and the latter manifests as the mind. Therefore Samskāra as mind produces life. With the destruction of mind

it is but natural that Sādhakas should oftener than not form a partial idea of the Supreme. The Sādhaka's idea of the Supreme regulates the results of his Sādhana. The Praśnopaniṣad thus sets forth the matter:

स यद्येकमात्रमभिध्यायीत, स तेनैव संवेदितस्तूर्णमेव जगत्यामभिसंपद्यते तमृचो मनुष्यलोकमुपनयन्ते, स तत्र तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संपन्नो महिमानमनुभवति ॥ ३ ॥

अथ यदि द्विमात्रेण मनसि संपद्यते, सोऽन्तरिक्षं यजुर्मिरुन्नीयते सोमलोकम् । स सोमलोके विभूतिमनुभूय पुनरावर्तते ॥ ४ ॥

यः पुनरेतं त्रिमात्रेणोमित्येतेनैवाक्षरेण परं पुरुषमभिध्यायीत स तेजसि सूर्ये संपन्नः । यथा पादोदरस्त्वचा विनिर्मुच्यत एवं ह वै सपाप्माना विनिर्मुक्तः स सामभिरुन्नीयते ब्रह्मलोकं स एतस्मात् जीवधनात् परात्परं पुरिशयं पुरुषमीक्षते ॥ ५ ॥

“If he (the Sādhaka) meditates on Brahman as consisting of one part only (the first part, as cognizer of the objective world), then by such meditation, acquiring knowledge, forthwith does he come to the earth (after death); the first part as R̥gveda transmits him to the human species, where, by penance, continence, and faith, he enjoys glory.”

“If he meditates on Brahman as consisting of the second part (cognizer of the subjective world), he attains the subjective world. He (after death) is carried by Yajurveda to the Soma Loka (Moon). There enjoying glory, he comes back amongst men.”

“He who meditates on the Great Lord as one whole, consisting of all the three parts, attains to the effulgent sun. As a snake gets rid of its skins so is he freed from his impurities, and is raised to the Brahma-Loka¹ by Sāmaveda. He realizes by meditation the Paramātmā, which is within the body of every being, and which is greater than the aggregate of Jīva, (individuals).”²

The Tāntrik systems of self-culture are constructed in strict accordance with the three aspects of the Divine Mother, so that no Sādhaka's work and toil may go amiss. They raise him step by step from the most external belfry to the innermost Tabernacle of Mother Mahākālī, never forcibly weaning him from his habits, but transforming those habits into fragrant flowers and grateful offerings.

¹ Called also Satyaloka, the highest region of the manifested Supreme.

² The manifested Supreme is the soul of all Jīvas. He is the Antarātmā of all beings within the form of Līṅga Deha. The apparently separated Jīvas are heaped together, as it were, in him without distinction, hence he is called “aggregate of Jīvas” (जीवघनः). While in the Brahmaloṅka-state the Sādhaka

The importance of possession of a thorough knowledge of Śakti is thus stated in Niruttara Tantra:

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते शक्तिज्ञानं प्रजायते ।
शक्तिज्ञानं विना देवि निर्वाणं नैव जायते ॥

“After many births the knowledge of Śakti is acquired. O Devī! without the knowledge of Śakti, Nirvāṇa is unattainable.”

The knowledge of Śakti is dependent upon self-culture for its attainment, for mere intellectual knowledge gained by study cannot raise a man to the state of Divinity. Even intellectual unerring knowledge of the transcendental science is not attainable without devotion to God and Guru.

The mind must be thoroughly trained in spirituality, and brought in harmony with supersensuous truths before one can hope to be able to understand the true import of that with which the transcendental science deals.

यस्य देवे पराभक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते सहात्मनः ॥
श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषत् ।

“The meaning of these truths of which I have spoken is revealed to the high-souled man, who has supreme and equal devotion to Devatā and Guru.”

The path of desire and the path of non-desire or cessation are the two paths, either of which a Sādhaka must choose for himself. As man is a bundle of desires and propensities, the regulation of such desires and propensities on lines which may eventually free him from those bondages of woe is the end and aim of all method, either Vaidik or Tāntrik. As the four Vedas are replete with hymns and prayers to God or the Gods, for the attainment of objects of desire, so also the Tantras are full of methods for the attainment of the same end. By following those methods, desires and propensities are circumscribed, passions curbed, and animal nature transformed into Divine nature. It is in the lot of but a few to pursue the path of cessation from the outset. The vast majority of men must be looked after, in order that they may not only save themselves, from being mere brutes, but may become good fathers, mothers, sons, brothers, neighbours, citizens—healthy, robust, and God-loving. The Tantra proclaims that its votaries shall become all these, irrespective of caste, colour, and creed.

Whether one be on the path of desire or on the path of cessation,

continually practising works prescribed by the Tantras one's mental and physical impurities are expurgated, the mind becomes pure and transparent, so as to be susceptible of the presence of the Divine light within; the body is no longer the habitual store of Rājasik and Tāmasik cells which incite the senses to ignoble works. By Jñānayoga knowledge of Divinity is gained, and by Bhakti Yoga, Jīva and Śiva are united, and the supreme good attained; for, according to Tāntrik Monism, not even a scintilla of difference is admitted to exist between Jīva and Śiva essentially.

One of the characteristic works prescribed in the Tantras is what is called Prayoga (deputation). Ordinarily, what man achieves is the result of his own exertions aided by the exertions of others, or of labour and skill purchased. But human exertions, labour, and skill often fail to produce a desired result. In the Hindu mind belief in the help of supersensuous beings is as ancient as the Vedas. Indeed, the Vedas are replete with sacrifices to Devas for attaining desired objects. The Tāntrik System, called "Deputation," is less arduous and less expensive, and can be given effect to within a short time. When at critical moments human efforts and skill give way, man in every country naturally raises his eyes upwards, imploring Divine help and mercy. Divine help and mercy, though in fact attainable, are yet very difficult to attain, for the degree of spiritual culture requisite for such a purpose is the attainment of but very few. The Tantra provides, however, comparatively easy means by which Devatās may be communicated with and their help obtained. This branch of Tāntrik knowledge is no part of a man's self-culture, it being merely an art, more useful than spiritually efficacious.

Whether in the path of desire or in the path of cessation, the worship of one Brahman is the burthen of the Tantra, and the object of that worship is the liberation of the individual soul from eternally recurring misery, uniting Ātmā with Ātmā, by the dissolution of the Kārmik body. To achieve that end, concentration, meditation, and communion are essential. But an object is necessary upon which to concentrate the mind. The universal or all-pervading form of Brahman functioning in undivided, homogeneous effulgence, through the waking, dreaming, and slumbering state of being, is scarcely such an object as the mind can grasp. Pratīkas¹ are therefore used as its substitute. The Avatāra forms, Yantras, and human forms in special Pūjās, are the best forms. Images are fashioned after Avatāra forms. When by dint of Sādhana Divine effulgence is cognized in a Pratīka, then is it that the Sādhaka's vision opens to see the universal Form. The incarnation forms² of the Divine Mother, called

¹ Pratīkas are substitutes of Brahman in Upāsana. Such substitutes are an aspect of Brahman, or a part of it, and are worshipped as if it were Brahman itself (B.K.M.).

the Ten Mahāvidyās, are the Upāśya Devatā (the worshipful God) of the Śākta Tāntriks. Sādhakas, according to their predilections, heredity, or mental conditions, worship one or other of them, believing the particular Form to be Brahman. Images of such Forms, or Yantras, are made, and external worship made to them as Brahman. If a Sādhaka's Sādhana be intense and high, Brahman or the Divine Mother manifests Her Divine Self in the image, which for the time being glows with Divine Life.

गवां सर्वाङ्गजक्षीरं सवेत् स्तनमुखाद्यथा ।

तथा सर्वगतो देवः प्रतिमादिषु राजते ॥

आभिरूप्याच्च विश्वस्य पूजायाश्च विशेषतः ।

साधकस्य च विश्वासाद्देवतासंनिधिर्भवेत् ॥

“As milk, pervading the whole body of cows, comes out through the teats, so is the all-pervading Deva revealed in images, etc. The reflection (of Ātmā) in images, etc., being the same as the Ātmā of the Sādhaka.¹ By virtue of the Pūjā and the Sādhaka's faith, the Devatā appears.”—Kulārṇava Tantra.

Sacrifice to God or the Gods in the form of food and drink is an old institution found in the records of almost all religions, ancient and modern, in all parts of the world, not even excepting Christianity and Mohammedanism. But the ethics of these religions do not give the *raison d'être* of such an institution. This seems to be, on the face of it, an anomaly, considering that the God of most of those religions is extra-kosmic and formless. The Vaidik manifested God being both immanent and transcendent in the Kosmos, the legitimate conclusion is what the Māṇḍūkya-yopaniṣad quoted above lays down as positive truth. In the Bhagavad-gītā, the Lord says:

“He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the purified self, offered as it is with devotion.”—Chap. ix, verse 26.

The Tantra, which claims to be the most correct and practical interpretation of Vaidik truths, holds that the Sādhaka who longs to be in harmony with the Divine Mother should not only sacrifice to Her as Vaiśvānara, but as Taijasa and Prājña as well.² Indeed, the whole life of a Sādhaka is a sacrifice; he must efface his own personality and Ahaṅkāra (I-am-ness), dedicating all his thoughts, deeds, and speech to the Divine

¹ The Sādhaka communicates the ray of his Ātmā to the image by what is called Prāṇapratiṣṭhā (Life-giving ceremony). (B.K.M.)

Mother who resides in full glory in his heart, and is the real cognizer of the body.

Understand me as the Knower of the Field (body) in all the Fields O Bhārata!"—Bhagavadgītā, chap. xiii, verse 2.

This is called Ātmanivedana (self-dedication). Egoism is the cause of heterogeneousness. The thought, "I am the doer, I am the eater, I am the enjoyer, and I am the sufferer," makes apparent divisions within the homogeneous One, thereby rendering the individualized egos a prey of the attractive and repulsive forces of Avidyā and their miseries. The initial work, therefore, of a Sādhaka is to surrender himself completely to the Divine Will.

"Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya! *do thou that as an offering unto Me.*

"Thus shalt thou be liberated from the bonds of action, yielding good and evil fruits; thyself harmonized by the Yoga of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me when set free."—Bhagavadgītā, chap. ix, verses 27, 28.

The question is, How can this complete resignation be effected—resignation in act, resignation in speech, and resignation in thought? Men's physical wants, passions, propensities, and emotions are the motives of his actions—either these are to be suppressed for the development of his spiritual nature, or they are to be so used that they may not bind, but become useful agents for leading the small self to the Great Mother. Suppression being out of the question, various devices have been resorted to for circumscribing them, prominent among which is Brahmacharya (absolute continence) and offering of food to God before it is taken. A Sādhaka on the high spiritual path should be a celibate and very abstemious in food. Such are the hardships and restraints imposed upon him that oftener than not he succumbs in his effort to soar to his high aim; the strength of his wings fails, and he falls down, bruised and broken. Thus rendered unfit for both the lower and the higher paths of culture, his life becomes a desert of burning sands and scorching winds. A householder is bidden to offer food to God, and then eat it as Prasāda (gracious leaving). He is enjoined to cohabit with his wife only during a few days in the month when fecundation is physiologically possible. These, as restraints on the propensities of eating and sexual intercourse (the two most prominent propensities which rule man's life), are serviceable bits wherewith to check the wayward steed of the senses; but the desire to relish the one and the other remains as fresh as ever. Though constant restraint may put down, it cannot efface. So says the Lord in the Bhagavadgītā.

"The objects of sense, *but not the relish for them*, turn away from an abstemious dweller in the body, and even relish turneth away from him

The Yogavāsīṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa says:

ज्ञेयं यावन्न विज्ञातं तावत्तावन्न जायते ।
विषयेष्वरतिर्जन्तोर्मरुभूमौ लता यथा ॥

“Man’s disrelish for the objects of sense does not arise until the Knowable is known, as a creeper (is not born) in a desert.”—Chap. ii.

So long as relish remains, so long is man’s individuality in the ascendant; and so long as man’s individuality is in the ascendant, so long he is the enjoyer of food, drink, and the like. How can, then, *all his actions* be offered to the Supreme so that the offerer may be liberated from the bonds of action?

The answer is, By self-surrender or resignation to the Supreme. The Tāntrik Sādhaka is enjoined to feel the Supreme as Divine Mother and Father, not only within himself, but within every being. By knowledge of Śāstra, by faith, and by devotion to God and Guru, he must persistently practise this feeling so that in time it becomes a part of his nature. The nature of the Supreme as the True Self, the real doer and the real feeler being realized, he can place his Kārmik self completely at Her disposal in all his acts with a devout heart and inflexible will; he can worship Her with his thoughts, feelings, and propensities, whatsoever they may be, and realize what he recites every morning.

प्रातरुत्थाय सायाह्नं सायाह्नात् प्रातरेव तु ।
यत्करोमि जगन्मातस्तदेव तव पूजनम् ॥

“From the time I rise in the morning till evening, and from evening till morning, whatsoever I do, O Mother of the Universe! that is surely Thy worship.”

This is the mental attitude (भावः) of a hero (वीरः) as distinguished from the mental attitude of the animal man (पशुः), who, however otherwise devoted and wise, eats the gracious leavings of God, relishing them as an individual only¹ and does not dare unite with his wife as an act of divine worship. Whereas every mouthful of food, every sexual relation, and every act is an oblation of the hero, who by these practical means spiritualizes his nature, and with the Divine Mother’s blessings becomes a Man-God (दिव्यः), to be eventually dissolved and lost within the blissful effulgence of Mother Ānandamayī.²

¹ When food (prasāda) is offered to the Devatā by the Paśu, it is considered that the Devatā eats the subtle portion and leaves the gross part for the worshipper. The latter eats it as devotee (Bhakta)—that is, as one who considers himself as separate from the Devatā, and whom he worships. The Vīra however, regards himself as the Devatā, and therefore, when he eats, it is the Devatā, and not the individual worshipper, who eats. This is a fundametal principle of the

Brahmamayī¹ has created this earth as the field wherein Jīvas must reap the fruits of this Karma, and as sparks of Divinity perpetuate the human species. To reap the fruits of Karma the body must be kept up by food, and to perpetuate the species sexual union must take place. But considering the misery attendant upon both these functions, none would care to participate in them were not the monitors of hunger and passion implanted in him, to goad him to action which he would not otherwise willingly take. But mere hunger and passion would not effectually serve the Divine purpose if relish for both were not implanted in him. As the Divine Mother and Father enjoy their creation in the aggregate, so does the Jīva in the individual. The Jīva being essentially the same as the Divine Mother and Father, bliss (Ānanda) is his natural heritage.

Thus both eating and sexual union are Divine acts, which have nothing impure in them. Impurity is the progeny of Ajñāna (absence of knowledge), which, having divorced Divinity from the Divine act, has lowered it into being mere sexual enjoyment. Thus, man divine has fallen from his high state to that of man the beast. It is the work of the Vīra (hero) to undo the instincts born of Ajñāna and harmonize himself with the Divine Law.

The Divine Mother creates, maintains, and annihilates the Universe as an act of retributive justice to Karma-bound Jīvas. It is Her pleasure or play (Līlā), that Her children, by reaping the fruits of their Karma, may return to Her lap, never again to be tied and fettered by Karma. She enacts this drama of the universe, and Herself enjoys it. Her actions, however, cast no fetters round Her, because She is free from attachment and repulsion, which are the binding cords of Māyā. It is this feature of Her character which differentiates Her from the Jīva. So the Vedāntik terse saying is:

स ईशः यद्वशे माया,
स जीवः यस्तयादितः ।

“He is God, under whose control is Māyā; He is Jīva, who is lorded over by Her (Māyā).”

The Jīva, who sets his heart upon the task of freeing himself from the bondage of Māyā, must infuse every part of the alluring frame of the Enchantress with Divine love, and then throw them as a sacrifice into the Fire of that Love. It is only by this means that lording Māyā may be brought under control.

What a Sādhaka must do to free himself from the attractions of objects of sense is thus stated in the Vāmakeśvara Tantra:

क्रियाकाण्डप्रकथने तन्त्रं बहुतरं भवेत् ।
 किञ्चिल्लक्षणमेतेषां संक्षेपात् कथयामि ते ॥
 काव्यशास्त्रे नवरसा योगे चाष्टौ रसाः स्मृताः ।
 अष्टादशप्रकारा हि विद्यायां परिकीर्तिताः ॥
 भक्तियोगे नवरसा ऋतवो विषये स्मृताः ।
 पञ्चमाद्या रसा देवि पञ्चपञ्चाशतः स्मृताः ॥
 भेदं रसानां वक्ष्यामि शृणुष्ववाहिते प्रिये ।
 शृङ्गारवीरकरुणहास्याद्भुतभयानकाः ॥
 बीभत्सः शान्तको रौद्रो नवधा काव्यशास्त्रके ।
 यमश्च नियमश्चैव आसनं प्राणसंयमः ॥
 प्रत्याहारो धारणा च समाधिर्ध्यानमष्टधा ।
 योगशास्त्रे महादेवि कथिता विस्तरात् प्रिये ॥
 छन्दः पादौ च वेदस्य मुखं व्याकरणं स्मृतम् ।
 शिक्षा घ्राणं महेशानि हस्तौ कल्पोऽथ कथ्यते ॥
 ज्योतिषं देवि तन्त्रेन निरुक्तं श्रोत्रमुच्यते ।
 अङ्गानि वेदाश्चत्वारो मीमांसान्यायविस्तरैः ॥
 धर्मशास्त्रं पुराणं च विद्या ह्येताश्चतुर्दश ।
 आयुर्वेदो धनुर्वेदो गान्धर्वश्चेति ते त्रयः ॥
 अर्थशास्त्रसमायुक्ता विद्याष्टादशधा रसाः ।
 मननं कीर्तनं ध्यानं स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ॥
 अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मसमर्पणम् ।
 इत्थं नवरसा देवि भक्तियोगे प्रकीर्तिताः ॥
 स्रगन्धवनिताशय्यावस्त्रालंकरणानि च ।
 कथिताः परमेशानि विषये ऋतवो रसाः ॥
 माद्याः पञ्च रसाः गौडीमाध्वीक्षुफलशय्यकाः ।
 एतेषु रसभावज्ञा ये ते वै रसिका स्मृताः ॥
 कृत्यविधिर्जपविधिर्द्रव्यशोधनिको विधिः ।

पुरश्चर्याविधिर्देवि कर्मकाण्डानि पञ्चधा ।

त्रिधा कृत्यविधिर्देवि प्रातः सायंदिनं तथा ॥

अनुभूय रसान् सर्वान् क्रियाकाण्डं विधाय च ।

साधकः स्थिरचित्तेन कुर्यात् पूर्णाभिषेचनम् ॥

“Many are the branches of knowledge touching work, some distinguishing features of which I shall briefly tell thee. In literature there are nine Rasas¹; there are said to be eight Rasas in Yoga; in learning there are eighteen Rasas; nine are the Rasas in the Yoga of devotion; in objects of sense there are six Rasas. O Devī! the Rasa of wine are five. These are the fifty-five Rasas. O Dear One! hear attentively the names of the Rasa in the different works mentioned. The nine Rasas in literature are—sexual love, heroism, compassion, laughter, wonder, terror, hate, peace, and anger. O Mahadevī! O Dear One! In Yoga Śāstra, Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyama, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi are the eight Rasas told in detail.² The eighteen Rasas of learning are—(1) Chandas, which are the legs of the Veda; (2) Vyākaraṇa (Grammar) is known to be its mouth; (3) Śikṣā is its nostrils; (4) its hands are said to be Kalpa; (5) O Devī! Jyotiṣa (astronomy, astrology) is its eyes; (6) Nirukta is its ears; (7-10) each of the four Vedas is a limb of the Veda; (11) Mīmāṃsā; (12) Nyāya³; (13) Dharma Śāstra; (14) Purāṇa; (15) Āyurveda; (16) Dhanurveda; (17) Gandharva Veda; and (18) Arthaśāstra.⁴ The nine Rasas in Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of devotion) are known, O Devī! to be thinking, praise, meditation, remembrance, serving the Holy Feet, worship and hymn, servitude, fellowship, and self-dedication. In objects of sense, O Parameśvarī! the six Rasas are—flowers, scents, the beloved woman, bed, dress, and ornaments. In wine the five Rasas are—that made of molasses, that made of honey, that made of sugar-cane, that made of fruits, and that made of corn.”

“Those who are experienced in the feeling of Rasa in these are called Rasika.”

“O Parameśvarī! O Devī! regulations concerning work are of five classes—namely, regulations as to daily service, Japa, purification, external and internal worship, and Puraścaraṇa.¹ Regulations as to daily service relate to morning, noon, and evening rites.”

¹ This term means relish, taste, sentiment, juice, etc.

² See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

³ Philosophies so-called.

“Experiencing all the Rasas and performing the prescribed works, the Sādhaka, with tranquil mind, shall perform Pūrṇābhiṣecana.”¹

भेदं रसानां वक्ष्यामि शृणुष्वभावहिता मया ।
 शृङ्गारो वीरतो ज्ञेयस्तस्मिन् ते करुणादयः ॥
 शृङ्गारादिर्घृणादिश्च अपि शृङ्गारतो भवेत् ।
 शृङ्गारस्तु यदा देवि परमार्थकसूचकः ।
 तदैव परमा शान्ती रुद्रत्वं संप्रपद्यते ॥
 तेषां प्रकरणार्थं तु शृणु प्राणाधिके मयि ।
 पादं विना शरीरस्य न गतिर्विद्यते प्रिये ॥
 छन्दसा वेदमार्गे तु प्रविशेन्न कदाचन ।
 अलंकारं विना छन्दो न शोभेत प्रियंवदे ॥
 चक्षुःपरोक्षभेदः स्यात् ज्योतिःशास्त्रं तथैव च ।
 चन्द्रसूर्यस्य ग्रहणात् ज्योतिः प्रत्यक्षतामियात् ॥
 वेदशाखा निरुक्तं स्यात् शाखाभिर्ब्रह्म जायते ।
 गानकार्ये श्रूयमाणे भक्तिर्भवति ब्रह्मणि ॥
 तदैव गानकृत्यं च मुखनासिकयोर्भवेत् ।
 गानं विना न नृत्यं स्यात् नृत्यं गानेन जायते ॥
 शिक्षाशास्त्रं नाटकादि शब्दव्याकरणं स्मृतम् ।
 अविनाभावसंबन्धात् द्वयोरेव शुचिस्मिते ॥
 वेदाः षडङ्गसहिताः ब्रह्मव्याख्यानतत्पराः ।
 न्यायेन सार्धं मीमांसा ब्रह्म निर्णीयते ध्रुवम् ॥
 ब्रह्मज्ञाने तु जीवस्य परमात्मविचारणम् ।
 धर्मशास्त्रानुसारेण व्यवस्थादिर्निरूपितः ॥
 पुराणाख्यानि तेनैव जायते सततं प्रिये ।
 ब्रह्मानन्दपरो जीव आत्मसंरक्षणोत्सुकः ॥
 आयुर्वेदं धनुर्वेदं गान्धर्वं च समभ्यसेत् ।
 अथ संधानतो देवि पूर्णज्ञानी च साधकः ॥

¹ The Pūrṇābhiṣecana here mentioned is not the second, but the fourth

मनुनेक्षुरसेनैव दुग्धादिफलशस्यकैः ।
 गन्धमाल्यादिना देवि वस्त्रालंकरणादिना ।
 शय्यायां वनितारूपां पूजयेज्जगदम्बिकाम् ॥
 वनितापूजने देवि शृङ्गाररससाधनम् ।
 पूजनं कर्मकाण्डं च पञ्चधा तत् प्रकीर्तितम् ॥
 तत्सर्वं साधयेद्वीरो देवीसंप्राप्तिहेतवे ।
 पूजने नवधा भक्तिः रसोल्लासं च जायते ॥
 तदा योगं समभ्यस्य समाधिस्थो भवेद्यतिः ।
 अत एव महेशानि पुरैव कथितं मया ॥
 अनुभूय रसान् सर्वान् पञ्चपञ्चाशतं प्रिये ।
 विषये कर्मकाण्डेषु निष्कामी भवति प्रिये ॥
 निष्कामे फलमाश्चर्यं तेन तृप्यति देवता ।
 देही देहं समाश्रित्य न च कर्म परित्यजेत् ॥
 दिव्यां क्रियां समाप्यैवं देवि यात्रादिकर्मणा ।
 पूर्णज्ञानरसानन्दाजीवन्मुक्तो भवेत् ध्रुवम् ॥

“Hear attentively from me the different characteristics of the Rasa. Sexual love should be learnt of the hero; in it are compassion, etc. Sexual love, etc., and hate, etc., arise from the sexual Rasa” (Śṛṅgāra).¹

“O Devī! when sexual love realises the Supreme Object (Paramārtha), then is Supreme tranquillity. (The Sādhaka) then acquires the state of Rudra.”

“O dearer than life! hear from me the purport of this. O Dear One! as the body cannot move without limbs, so the Vedic path none can enter without a knowledge of Chandas (metre). O sweet-tongued Devī! Chandas is not beautiful without rhetoric. The eye penetrates that which is unseen, so does astronomy; eclipses of the sun and the moon make astronomy a science of direct evidence. Nirukta is a branch of Veda from the branches Brahmā is born. Devotion to Brahmā arises from hearing songs; song arises from the mouth and nostrils. Without song

¹ Which is the root principle of all creation. Sexual love in this passage refers to its manifestation in the individual. The sexual Rasa from which it arises is its general principle of origin.

² That is when śṛṅgāra, which the author translates as sexual love, is experienced in the union of the Jīvātma and Paramātma—that is the supreme object of Sādhana. The Bhairavī is Devī. The Sādhaka is Śiva. In the

there is no dance; dancing is born of songs. Śikṣā and drama, etc., words and grammar are the couples inseparably allied. The Vedas with their six limbs explain the Brahman. The Nyāya with Mīmāṃsā surely explains Brahman. From constant thought upon the Paramātmā, knowledge of Brahman arises in the Jīva. Precepts are settled according to Dharma Śāstra; Purāṇas spring from it, O Dear One; The Jīva, the Supreme object of whose life is bliss Divine (Brahmānanda), and who is eager for self-preservation, must learn Ayurveda (science of life—i.e., medical science), Dhanurveda (archery), and Gāndharva Veda (music)."

"O Devī, the fully wise Sādhaka, with honey, juice of sugar-cane, milk, corn, scents, garlands, dress, and ornaments, should worship in union woman, who is the image of the Mother of the Universe. O Devī! the culture of the Rasa of sexual love¹ consists in the worship of woman.² Worship and the five classes of work already stated should be performed by the hero (Vīra) for attaining the Devī. By worship arise nine degrees of devotion and ecstasy of Rasa. Then the Yogī, practising Yoga, shall be immersed in communion" (Samādhi).

"Therefore, O Maheśānī, have I already stated that by feeling all the fifty-five Rasas one loses all desire for objects of sense and worldly work.³ The effect of non-desire is wonderful, and the Divine Mother is gratified by it. Embodied man cannot give up Karma (action) so long as he is embodied; so, concluding in this wise, divine acts by festive, religious, and other works, the Sādhaka verily becomes liberated in this life (Jīvanmukta) by virtue of his full knowledge and bliss of Rasa."—Chap. liv.

Wine, as a means of spiritual self-culture, is another singular feature of some forms⁴ of Tāntrik Sādhana. In India the free use of wine in social and religious festivals was fairly general in the Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara Ages (Yugas). It was, however, probably after the ruin of the race of Yādus during the last days of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life that stringent laws were framed in the Smṛti Śāstras against the use of wine by three higher classes. Those laws were sedulously administered by the Hindu Governments, and the result was a general abhorrence of spirituous drinks. Nothing better could have been devised for the welfare of man, for wine not only wastes the body, but it works havoc on the intellectual and moral faculties, pulling down man to the level of beasts. The Tantra Śāstra—the Word of God—is fully alive to this:

¹ Śṛṅgārarasasādhana.

² Vanitāpūjane. According to the "Mahānirvāṇa Tantra" the worshipper's own wife.

³ Each pleasure is but a portion (khaṇḍa) of the whole mixed with pain. He who has felt the whole (akhaṇḍa) attains Brahma bliss and loses desire for worldly things.

कौलज्ञाने ह्यसिद्धो यस्तद्द्रव्यं भोक्तुमिच्छति ।
 स महापातकी देवि सर्वकर्मबहिष्कृतः ॥
 असंस्कृतं पिवेद् द्रव्यं बलात्कारेण मैथुनम् ।
 स्वप्त्रियेण हतं मांसं रौरवं नरकं व्रजेत् ॥
 वृथा पानं तु देवेशि सुरापानं तदुच्यते ।
 यन्महापातकं देवि वेदादिषु निरूपितम् ॥

“One who, being unripe in Kaula knowledge, wishes to drink wine, is, O Devī! a great sinner, and is unfit to perform all religious works.”

“He goes to Raurava Hell who drinks unpurified wine, commits rape, and slaughters animals for self-gratification.”

“O Devī! that is called drinking of wine which is not for Divine purposes; that is a great sin according to the Vedas, etc.”—Kulārṇava Tantra. (5-95, 99).

Further, it is said in the same Tantra (2. 117-119):

मद्यपानेन मनुजो यदि सिद्धिं लभेत् वै ।
 मद्यपानरताः सर्वे सिद्धिं गच्छन्तु पामराः ॥
 मांसभक्षणमात्रेण यदि पुण्यगतिर्भवेत् ।
 लोके मांसाशिनः सर्वे पुण्यमाजो भवन्तिवह ॥
 स्त्रीसंभोगेन देवेशि यदि मोक्षं व्रजन्ति वै ।
 सर्वेऽपि जन्तवो लोके मुक्ताः स्युः स्त्रीनिषेवणात् ॥

“If man could attain spirituality by drinking, then all ignoble drinkers would be liberated. If residence in heaven be the result of meat-eating, then all carnivorous beings would be righteous. If O Devī! enjoyment of women be the cause of liberation, then all creatures by enjoying women would be liberated.”

Why, then, it may be asked, are all these “gates of hell” introduced in self-culture, the object of which is liberation from the fascinations of Māyā? The same Tantra which prescribes Sādhana with woman, wine, and meat, prescribes also various other methods of worship, and supplies Mantras, without which Hinduism all over India would be paralyzed. It is irrational to accept one portion of a Śāstra as valuable and reject another as worthless. The earnest inquirer must forgo his prejudices and passions, cherished ideas and preconceived notions, before he can enter the holy temple of spiritual truth embodied in the mandates of Lord Śiva. It must always be remembered that this is spiritual culture, and not the

The Tantra Śāstra, like all other revelations, does not always assign reasons for its mandates, but asserts that as Sādhana is practical, the most direct evidence of the truth of its statements can be obtained by accepting the Sādhana and working according to instructions.

The principle underlying this Sādhana is thus enunciated:

यैरेव पतनं द्रव्यैः सिद्धिस्तैरेव चोदिता ।

श्रीकौलदर्शने चैव भैरेवेण महात्मना ॥

“The Great Bhairava has ordained in the Kaula doctrine that Siddhi (spiritual advancement) must be achieved by means of those very things which are the causes of man’s downfall.”—Kulārṇava Tantra.

The consideration of this principle leads us, in the first place, to adopt the evidence of analogy in regard to the physical body of man. Cobra poison, arsenic, aconite, croton, opium, and other animal and vegetable poisons, are destructive of life. But skilfully prepared and purified, they not only save life but invigorate it. The Indian physician’s preparation of cobra poison is famous for its life-giving and invigorating virtues, so are the apothecary’s preparations of arsenic, etc. In some parts of India raw arsenic is used in moderate quantities for prolonging life and putting off old age. It would thus appear that nothing is absolutely harmful in Nature. By skilful manipulation even poison yields manna. The poison of wine, by skilful treatment according to Tāntrik precepts and instructions of Gurus, is not only rendered innocuous, but is turned into a distinct force of labour, energy, patience, and intrepidity, all of which are essential in spiritual culture.

Wine, by exciting the brain, turns the mind to that channel of thought which is uppermost in the drinker’s mind.¹ When the mind is pre-eminently devotional, the effect of wine upon it is to render it more so by concentrating all the thoughts upon the object of devotion. Ecstasy (Ullāsa) and communion (Samādhi) are after a long practice its ripper developments in a Sādhaka.

That which most attracts men to the taking of wine is its power to develop happiness in the drinker. The Sādhaka’s mind, freed from all base and ignoble thoughts and feelings, enjoys Brahmānanda (Brahman Bliss) under its influence.

As to the use of meat and fish, the Vaidik and the Tāntrik Śāstras agree in holding that slaughter of animals for Divine purposes is not sinful.

पितृदेवादियज्ञेषु वैधर्हिंसा विधीयते ।

आत्मार्थं प्राणिनां हिंसा कदाचिन्नेदिता प्रिये ॥

¹ The effect of wine is to intensify and reveal what is already in the mind.

अनिमित्तं तृणं वापि छेदयेन्न कदाचन ।

देवतार्थं द्विजार्थं वा हत्वा पापैर्न लिप्यते ॥

“O Dear One! in sacrifices to the Pitrs and Gods killing of prescribed animals is ordained. For self-gratification killing of beings is nowhere permitted. Even a blade of grass should never be cut without a lawful purpose. Killing for the satisfaction of the Gods and twice-born (Dvijas) ¹ is not sinful.”

The Kulārṇava Tantra says:

यथैवानुचरा राज्ञ प्रियाः स्युर्न बहिश्चराः ।

तथान्तर्यागनिष्ठा ये ते प्रिया देवि नापरे ॥

समर्पयन्ति ये भक्त्या कराभ्यां पिशितासवम् ।

उत्पादयन्ति चानन्दं मत्प्रियाः कौलिकाश्च ते ॥

आवयोः परमाकारं सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणम् ।

कुलद्रव्योपभोगेन जायते नान्यथा प्रिये ॥

सेविते च कुलद्रव्ये कुलतत्त्वार्थदर्शिनः ।

जायते भैरवावेशः सर्वत्र समदर्शिनः ॥

तमःपरिवृतं वेष्टम यथा दीपेन दृश्यते ।

तथा मायावृत्ते ह्यात्मा द्रव्यपानेन दृश्यते ॥

मन्त्रपूतं कुलद्रव्यं गुरुदेवार्पितं प्रिये ।

ये पिबन्ति जनास्तेषां स्तन्यपानं न विद्यते ॥

सुरा शक्तिः शिवो मांसं तद्वक्तो भैरवः स्वयम् ।

तयोरैक्यं समुत्पन्नमानन्दं मोक्ष उच्यते ॥

आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो रूपं तत्तु देहे व्यवस्थितम् ।

अस्याभिव्यञ्जकं मद्यं योगिभिस्तेन पीयते ॥

निःसङ्गो निर्भयो वीरो निर्द्वन्द्वो निष्कुतूहलः ।

निर्णोतवेदशास्त्रार्थो वरदां वारुणीं पिबेत् ॥

मन्त्रसंस्कारशुद्धाश्चामृतपानेन पार्वति ।

जायते देवताभावो भवबन्धविमोचकः ॥

तृप्त्यर्थं सर्वदेवानां ब्रह्मज्ञानार्थमेव च ।
 सेवेत मधुमांसानि तृष्णया चेत् स पातकी ॥
 मन्तार्थस्फुरणार्थाय मनसः स्थैर्यहेतवे ।
 भवपाशनिवृत्त्यर्थं मधुपानं समाचरेत् ॥
 सेवते यः सुखार्थाय मद्यादीनि स पातकी ।
 प्राशयेद्देवताप्राप्त्यै ह्यभिलाषविवर्जितः ॥
 मत्स्यमांसासवादीनां मादनानां निषेवणम् ।
 यागकालं विनान्यत्र दूषणं कथितं प्रिये ॥
 यथा क्रतुषु विप्राणां सोमपानं विधीयते ।
 मधुपानं तथा कार्यं समये भोगमोक्षदम् ॥
 श्रीगुरोः कुलशास्त्रेभ्यः सम्यन्विज्ञाय वासनाम् ।
 पञ्चमुद्रां निषेचेत चान्यथा पातकी भवेत् ॥
 अयध्वा भैरवं देवमकृत्वा गन्त्रतर्पणम् ।
 पशुपानविधौ पीत्वा कौलोऽपि नरकं व्रजेत् ॥

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 स्वलक्ष्यादिन्द्रियगणं संपाद्यात्मनि योजयेत् ।
 मांसाशी स भवेद्देवि शेषः स्युः प्राणिहिंसकाः ॥
 अप्रबुद्धा पशोः शक्तिः प्रबुद्धा कौलिकस्य च ।
 शक्तिं तां सेवयेच्चस्तु स भवेच्छक्तिसेवकः ॥
 परशक्त्यात्ममिश्रुनसंयोगानन्दनिर्भरः ।
 य आस्ते मैथुनं यत् स्यादितरे स्त्रीनिषेवकाः ॥
 इत्यादि पञ्चमुद्राणां वासनां कुलनायिके ।
 ज्ञात्वा गुरुमुखाद्देवि यः सेवेत स मुच्यते ॥

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 पूजाभिषेकसहितो देवि शास्त्रार्थतत्त्ववित् ।
 देवतागुरुभक्तं च नियतं योऽर्चयेत् प्रिये ॥
 कुलागमरहस्यज्ञो देवताराधनोत्सुकः ।

शुद्धात्मा चातिसंहृष्टः क्रोधलौल्यविवर्जितः ।
 पशुव्रतादिविमुखः संमुखस्तर्पयेत् प्रिये ॥
 मन्त्रयोगेन देवेशि कुर्यात् श्रीचक्रपूजनम् ।
 तदहं तु त्वया सार्धं गृह्णामि स्वयमादरात् ॥
 भैरवोऽहमिति ज्ञानात् सर्वज्ञादिगुणान्वितः ।
 इति संचिन्त्य योगीशः कुलपूजारतो भवेत् ॥
 इत्यादिलक्षणोपेतः कौलिको नियतव्रतः ।
 यस्त्वां समर्चयेद्देवि भुक्तिमुक्त्योः स भाजनः ॥

“As the personal servants of a king and not the State servants are dear to him, so, O Devī! are those who are devoted to internal worship, not others. Those who with devotion offer with their hands meat and wine cause bliss (Ānanda); they are, my Dear One! Kaulikas. Our Supreme form described as Sat, Cit, and Ānanda, verily develops, O Dear One! by the enjoyment of wine. Bhairava inspires those who drink with a knowledge of the principles of Kula (Śakti), and who view all objects with an even eye. As a dark house is illumined by light, so does the Ātmā, enveloped by Māyā, become visible by drinking. O Dear One! those who drink wine sanctified by Mantra (the mystic words of power) and offered to Gurudeva will never drink the mother's milk again (that is, will never be reborn). Wine is Śakti, meat is Śiva. Their enjoyer is Bhairava himself; the bliss arising from their union is called liberation. Ānanda is Brahman. It exists in bodies. Wine reveals it; hence Yogīs drink it. Without attachment, fearless, unmoved by pairs of opposites (as pleasure and pain), without curiosity to know, versed in Vaidik lore, the Vira drinks wine which grants blessings.”

* * * *

“O Pārvatī! the drink of nectar purified by Mantra develops god-like nature, and liberates man from the bondage of the world.”

* * * *

“For the gratification of the Gods, and also for the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman, should wine and meat alone be taken; he is a sinner who consumes them in order to satisfy his carnal appetite. Wine should be drunk in order that a clear perception of the form (of the Devatā) arising from the Mantra (of the Sādhaka) may be thereby attained, and for pacification of the mind and the undoing of the bondage of the world. He who takes wine and the rest for self-gratification is a sinner. These things should be taken without thirst and

partaking of fish, meat, wine, and other things which cause excitement, at times other than those of worship, is sinful. As Soma-drinking is prescribed to Brāhmaṇas during sacrifice, so wine, as that which yields joy and liberation, should be drunk at its proper time. It is only after the true import of the Kula Śāstra has been learnt from the Guru that one should partake of the five articles,¹ otherwise one becomes a sinner. Even a Kaula goes to hell who drinks after the manner of Paśus² without worshipping Bhairava Deva, and without doing Tarpaṇa with Mantra."

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"He who withdraws the senses from their objects and unites them with Ātmā is a true meat-eater, others are mere slaughterers of animals. The Śakti of a Paśu is asleep, that of a Kaula is awake; he who enjoys this Śakti is an enjoyer of Śakti. He who enjoys the bliss arising from the union of Parāśakti with Ātmā has true sexual union,³ others are mere enjoyers of women. O Mistress of Kula! he who partakes of the five articles, knowing from the mouth of the Guru their true significance, is liberated."

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"O Devī! I myself with Thee accept with pleasure Śrīcakra Pūjā performed with Mantra by one, well-versed in the Śāstrik import of Pūjā and Abhiṣeka, who is devoted to Devatā and Guru, who worships daily, who knows the esoteric meanings of the Kula Śāstra, who with zeal performs worship, who has received instructions from Guru, whose mind is pure, who is active, who is devoid of anger and greed, who is averse to the religious practices of Paśus, and who offers oblations. The wise Yogī should perform Kula-pūjā, filling his mind with the thought 'I am Bhairava'. Possessed of these and other qualities the Kaulika who regularly worships Thee obtains enjoyment and liberation."

These rather long extracts will, it is hoped, amply repay perusal, and bring home to the mind of the unbiased, earnest inquirer the truth of the compatibility of enjoyment and liberation existing harmoniously, provided that such enjoyment be lawful and not sinful. Yoga, which liberates, and Bhoga (enjoyment), which chains down, have been treated as though they were poles asunder in other schools of thought, which make it incumbent upon the pursuer of the one to shun the other as one would shun a deadly cobra. The effect of this has been referred to more than once in this essay. The Tantra Śāstrā reconciles the two, not only in theory, but in practice. The testimony of thousands of Tāntrik Yogīs from remote antiquity corroborates its truth.

¹ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

² Pañcamudrā.

Obeisance to the Supreme Divinity, the All-good and Beauteous Mother

CHAPTER XI

ON MANTRA ¹

THE tribute of water which Bhagavān Sūryadeva,² the Regulator of the entire universe, takes from the earth during the eight months of Kārtika, Agrahāyaṇa, Pauṣa, Māgha, Phālguna, Caitra, Vaiśākha, and Jyaiṣṭha, He returns to the same earth in the form of rain during the four months of Āṣādhā, Śrāvaṇa, Bhādra and Āśvina. This taking of tribute again is performed by the stretching out of arms. Arm is the name of the agency by which things are done.³ For this reason Sūryadeva is called by the names of "the thousand-rayed one," "the thousand-armed one," and so forth. Terrestrial water is drawn by the power of the sun, and rises to the solar region.⁴ It is this power of the sun which is called by the name of Raudra.⁵ It is, however, a matter for consideration why the power of the sun is called Raudra. It ought to have been called Saura (that is, appertaining to the sun). Raudra is what appertains to Rudra. Why, then, is sunshine called Raudra? In order to understand that it is necessary to discuss the subject⁶ of Gāyatrī. Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī, the presiding and controlling Deities of the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas, the Creatrix, Preservatrix, and Destructress respectively, are the three Śaktis⁷ whose forms are meditated upon in

¹ Mantratattva—that is, the subject of and principles relating to Mantra.

² Sun God.

³ There is from the beginning a play on the Sanskrit word kara, which means "tribute," "ray," and "arm," and is derived from the verbal root Kr, to do.

⁴ Sūryaloka.

⁵ Sunshine.

⁶ Tattva.

⁷ Śakti is that "which makes able," or the power by which things happen or act. That power belongs to, or more properly is, the Brahman (God), and manifests in various ways (see Chapter VII of First Part). At Sandhyā the Sādhaka worships the three powers of the Brahman as creator, maintainer, and destroyer of all things. These Śaktis are contemplated upon in the female forms of Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī and Raudrī, or Maheśvarī, the Śaktis of Brahmā,

water possesses the power (Śakti) of preserving life, or that it has the power of destroying it? Again, fish, tortoise, crocodile, shell-fish, and other aquatic animals are born in that same water and live therein, and die if taken out of it. Are we to understand from this that water has the power of creating and preserving life? The same sunshine which destroys the life of the wayfarer oppressed by summer heat in some far-stretching plain gives life to the cold Himalayan traveller whose limbs have been stiffened by the fall of snow. Say, now, does this indicate the life-destroying power or the life-preserving power of sunshine? Without this sunshine, trees, shrubs, and creepers dwindle and die. Again, this very sunshine draws water from the earth and carries it to the solar orb. It was Nārāyaṇa,¹ the preserver of the world, who destroyed Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Kamsa,² and others in their incarnations, as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. His name varies accordingly, and is suited to the different forms of His play in different capacities. The energy³ which draws water from the earth is Raudra⁴ or terrible, so far as water is concerned. The same energy which previously manifested a different form then assumes a terrible aspect⁵ for the purpose of drawing water. For this reason, although it is Saura or solar energy, it is then Raudra or terrible energy. Thus sunshine is called Raudra or terrible. The play of His forms and their names correspond to the play of the Guṇas. Brother Sādhaka, consider but once what difference does there lie between this Raudra or sunshine and Sūrya or sun. Sun is the name of a mass of compact energy³ solid and circular in form, while Raudra or sunshine is the name of the rays which it scatters on every side of it. In fact, the difference between the sunshine and the sun is the same as that between the waves of the sea and the sea. Just as in the sea, water exists in a collected form, so in the solar orb energy³ exists in such form. Just as in the sea single waves heave eternally, so do waves of energy in the solar orb. It must, therefore, be understood that wave is the same thing as water, and sunshine is the same thing as sun. The solar orb lies above (terrestrial water) at a distance of one lakh of yojanas⁶ and terrestrial water lies below (the sun) at the same distance. If the sun were to cease to draw this water from the earth by his energy, would it be in the power of water to rise to the solar orb? Or would it be in the power of anything else in this universe to raise water to the solar orb? At what height lies that Brahmayāi who is hardly known to Vedas and

¹ Viṣṇu.² Daityas, or demoniac beings.³ Tejas.⁴ Raudra is an adjective of Rudra or Śiva, and means "terrible". The reason why sunshine is called Raudra or "terrible" is later explained.⁵ Rudra Mūrti.

Vedāngas, and worshipped with difficulty by Yogis and princes of Yogis—She who is beyond the reach of mind and speech of even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and who is above the three Guṇas? Again, at what depth does the insignificant Jīva lie—he who is devoid of true consciousness,¹ full of Māyā, and a member of the Samsāra, which is made of the Guṇas in various combinations? Can it ever be in the power of the Jīva to enter by his own unaided Jīvaśakti² into Śivaśakti³? Can the child who wishes to rise to the arms of its mother do so unless the gracious mother extends her affectionate arms and herself raises her child? Who has the power and courage to say to him who stands in this limitless field of the universe and desires to go to Her, “Go, Sādhaka, reach safely the arms of the Mother of the Dispeller of all obstacles,⁴ I stand security for your success?” That alone which has such power is Mantraśakti.⁵ Both Bhagavān and Bhagavatī, therefore, say, “Just as Parabrahman is my eternal self, so also Śabdabrahman⁶ (which is Mantraśakti) is my eternal self.” Like sunshine, which is the energy of the sun, Mantraśakti alone is able to raise the Jīvas who inhabit this universe to the arms of Brahmamayī, for Mantraśakti is Herself. Mantraśakti alone can lead the unconscious Jīva-world to a true perception of Paramātmā by endowing it with that consciousness which it is. For this reason Mantraśakti is that which is alone efficient in all Sādhana,⁷ prescribed in the Ārya Śāstra, or to secure the Siddhi spoken of in it. Just as a lifeless body is incapable of work, so methods and processes devoid of Mantraśakti are incapable of achieving anything in the domain of Sādhana.

In my brief account of Mantra in the First Part of “Tantra tattva,”⁸ I have shown that the Devatā presiding over a Mantra appears in a two-fold aspect—first in the aspect of Vācaka Śakti, and secondly in the aspect of Vācya Śakti. The Vācya Śakti reveals Itself only when the Vācaka Śakti has been aroused through the worship of the Sādhaka. Whatever may be the appearance of the Devatā presiding over a Mantra, such appearances are nothing but different manifestations of power⁹ of Kula-kundalinī¹⁰ playing at the aperture in the Mūlādhāra. It is the string of

¹ Literally, “he who is Jaḍa”.

² The Śakti appertaining to Jīvahood, the state of the embodied spirit.

³ The Śakti appertaining to Śivahood. ⁴ Vighnahara, a name of Gaṇeśa.

⁵ The potency of Mantra, which is Devatā.

⁶ Supreme Brahman as contrasted with the Manifesting Śabda Brahman (Sound Brahman).

⁷ That is, spiritual training, practice, and ritual of all kinds which are the cause of spiritual achievement (Siddhi). (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁸ p. 273.

⁹ Vibhūti.

¹⁰ The Devī of that name whose abode is the Mūlādhāra Cakra of the Jīva.

fifty letters from A to Kṣa which is the (rosary) of Akṣas¹ of Mother Sarasvatī. Out of these fifty letters have been formed the nine crores² of great Mantras, which are the sole source and means of Siddhi and Sādhana.³ A Mantra takes different forms according as it appears as seed, sprout, root, stem, trunk, branch, twig, leaf, flower, and fruit. Just as one cannot have leaf, flower, fruit, twig, and so forth, without first sowing the seed, so one cannot acquire competence⁴ for the reception of other Mantras without first being initiated in the special Mantra of the Devatā.⁵ For this reason the Mantra of the Devatā which is received at the time of initiation is called Bijamantra, or seed-mantra. The great Bija or seed which Parabrahman as Guru sows in the field of the Sādhaka's heart, after having cleared, ploughed, and irrigated it with the water of His grace. The Mantra formed of the name of a Devatā is the sprout which rises out of that great Mantra, and Tāntrik Sandhyā,⁶ Gāyatrī,⁷ Nyāsa,⁸ Pūjā,⁹ and Upacāra-mantras.⁸ are all its stems, trunk, branches, and twigs. Hymns of praise⁹ and homage¹⁰ are its leaves and flowers; and the Kavaca,¹¹ consisting of Mantras, is its fruit. Just as all seeds are contained in the fruits, and sprout, trunk, leaf, flower, and so forth, are contained in the seed in extremely subtle states, so all Bijamantras are contained in the Kavaca, which is the fruit of Mantra; and Siddhi and Sādhana-śakti,¹² and so forth, are also contained in the Bija in extremely subtle state. Now, to-day many people, through ignorance of Śāstric principles, think that Mantra is the name of the words by which one expresses what one has to say to the supreme Divinity. It therefore follows that I may submit my prayer to Him in whatever language I choose. What, then, is the necessity of my using the ever ancient words of the Śāstra? In reply to this we would at the very start point out that the definition which has been given to Mantra by those who hold this view is contrary to Śāstric principles, and consequently incorrect. In defining Mantra, Śāstra says: "That is called Mantra,¹³ from the Manana or meditation of which arises the Universal special knowledge, that is, special knowledge embracing the whole universe, or realization of the Monistic truth that the substance of the Brahmāṇḍa¹⁴ is not different from that of the Brahman. *Man* of mantra comes from

¹ Seeds of a plant used for rosaries.

² A crore is ten million.

³ See note *ante*. ⁴ Adhikāra. ⁵ That is, the Sādhaka's Iṣṭadevatā.

⁶ These terms are explained in Arthur Avalon's *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ The Mantra by that name.

⁸ Mantras used in making offerings to Devatās. ⁹ Stuti. ¹⁰ Vandana.

¹¹ The protective Mantra. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*)

¹² That is, the Śakti generated by Sādhana.

¹³ Derived from the combination of *man* and *tra*.

Manana, which leads to Trāṇa, or liberation from the bondage of Samsāra ¹ (*tra* of Mantra comes from trāṇa) and which calls forth (āmantraṇa) Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and produces Mokṣa.²

Putting aside unbelievers, such as have faith in the ordinances of the Śāstra must now understand that to be mantra, in which eternally exists the super-worldly threefold power of perceiving the Brahman in and throughout the Universe, of loosening the bonds of Samsāra,³ and of calling forth Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa.³

Everyone desires to practise Sādhana and Bhajana,⁴ but the question is whether the hard labour which is involved will bear fruit directly. Who can answer this question? Faced by this difficult problem, who but Mantra alone can proudly and loudly declare, "Siddhi comes from Japa,"⁵ "Siddhi comes from Japa, Siddhi comes from Japa without doubt"? Who has the confidence to say: "If Siddhi is not achieved, I shall be responsible"? Who holds such dominion over the three worlds as to be able to stand between that Devatā who is sought for difficult of worship, and beyond the reach of mind and speech on the one hand and the Jīvasādhaka steeped in great delusion on the other, and say: "Sādhaka, be not afraid, I stand surety for you"? That surety is Mantra alone, the grantor of Siddhi and redeemer of all liabilities. How indomitable must be the attractive force of Mantra that it is able of its own strength to move even the great Devatā, who is eternally possessed of Siddhi, and so stay by its own mighty power even the movements of Prakṛti, instilling Śivahood into the Sādhaka by the expulsion of his Jīva nature; thus making, without labour on his part, the eight forms of Siddhi to play constantly before his eyes. When by virtue of Siddhi in Mantra vision of the three worlds is opened to the Sādhaka, then nothing is super-worldly to him. When by the grace of Mahāmāyā the door of Her Māyā which makes the impossible possible is opened, then there is nothing impossible for the Sādhaka himself. For this reason, it is sheer ignorance to suppose that Mantra is mere language. Bijamantras, in particular, cannot possibly be language, for they convey no meaning according to the human use of language.

¹ The Samsāra is the coming and going, the cycle of birth, action, death, and rebirth; the world in which all live who have not by knowledge of the self (ātmajñāna) and the extinction of the will to separate life attained liberation or mokṣa.

² That is, Religion, Wealth, Desire, and its fulfilment known as the Trivarga, forming with mokṣa (liberation) the caturvarga, or four aims of all sentient beings. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*)

³ See *ante*.

⁴ As to Sādhana, see *ante*. Bhajana is simple worship.

⁵ Japa, oral or mental. "recitation" of Mantra, which is here stated to

They are the Devatā Herself,¹ who is the highest spiritual object for us. They are neither language, nor words, nor letters,² nor anything which you and I read or write but the Devatā, who is eternally possessed of Siddhi, and is the Dhvani,³ which makes all letters sound, and exists in all that we may say or hear. It is a great sin even to think that that Devatā is mere letters. The Śāstra has, therefore, said: "They go to hell who think that Gurudeva is but a man, Mantra is but letter, and image of a Devatā is but a stone."

Here it is necessary to understand with some clearness the nature⁴ of alphabets.⁵ Commonly we consider alphabets to be written characters and pronounced letters.⁶ In ordinary usage all the letters⁶ are called Akṣaras,⁶ but "Letters"⁶ come to an end the moment they are pronounced, and never wait for a third moment. Viewing the matter from this philosophical standpoint, it is impossible for a word, a sentence, or language in general to be a combination of letters.⁷ As, for instance, in pronouncing the word Kalaśa (pitcher), when La is pronounced after Ka, Ka is no more; and when Śa is pronounced after La, La is no more; so that, although the letters Ka, La, and Śa are successively pronounced, it is impossible to pronounce (all at once) the word Kalaśa. As a matter of fact, it is the letters which are pronounced, and not the words. Only the letters linked together in the forms of words as willed by Īśvara are pronounced successively one after another according to rules of the Śāstras. It has, therefore, been said: "The particular letters and number of letters which Īśvara has ordained should convey a particular meaning, and are capable of conveying that meaning, do, when uttered successively in the manner fixed, convey that meaning." The truth concerning the origin of language is that after the appearance of the Vedas, which are the Śabdabrahmaṇī⁸ in the form of Mantras, Īśvara, when creating for the world of Jīvas languages consisting of an aggregate of sounds,⁹ willed that such and such letters,¹⁰ when combined together, should as a sound convey

¹ Literally, Svarūpa of the Devatā. Svarūpa literally means "having its own form," as opposed to the existence or appearance of the same thing in another form.

² Varṇa or Akṣara.

³ Unlettered sound.

⁴ Tattva.

⁵ Akṣara.

⁶ Varṇa. Both Varṇa and Akṣara (Letters) are Kuṇḍalinī made articulate in speech and visible in writing. Akṣara also means an alphabet and "indestructible".

⁷ That is, there cannot be a combination of letters any more than there can be such between the present and the past.

such and such a meaning.¹ This is the eternal law and accomplished fact. No one can change it by reasoning, argument, and controversy, and cause a revolution in language. It is the existence of this eternal law which supports the world. For this reason the Śāstra has said: "The three worlds would all have lain in deep darkness had not the light called Śabda (sound) blazed throughout the entire Samsāra." The sound here referred to is that of the Vaidik language approved of by the Śāstra. It is unnecessary to mention other languages, for they are all but transformations² of that great Prakṛti the Vaidik language. However that may be, our concern at present is with the original language only. Here also two letters cannot be pronounced together. How can we admit that to be an Akṣara³ (letters of the alphabet), which is created at one instant, is destroyed at the next, and which when pronounced has disappeared? Yet its name is Akṣara—that is to say, that which never wastes, is never destroyed, but is unbeginning, unending, ever established, and everlasting. It is a pity that, although we have all along been writing, reading, seeing, and hearing Akṣaras⁴ we do not know as yet what an Akṣara is. Bhagavān has said: "Just as Parabrahman is my eternal body, so Śabdabrahman is also my eternal body." Who but that self-manifest Bhagavān whose eternal body is sound can set forth its nature? In the Yoginī Tantra it is said that at the beginning of creation, after the dissolution⁵ at the end of a Kalpa,⁶ the unborn and immortal charmer of the mind of Mahākāla⁷ stood with warrior frenzy on his breast in order to destroy the Daitya⁸ named Ghora, who had been born out of a part of Śiva in the course of the joyful play of the two Parabrahmans.⁹ The infinite millions of Yoginīs¹⁰ born of the rays of that lustrous form of the Mother of the World then began to dance around Her in mad joy. The war-music of Brahmayā in martial play began to resound upon the battlefield of the entire Universe. Beating time to that music, my Mother, who is, as it were, the flag of victory over death,¹¹ set in motion a second period of dissolution⁵ by Her untiring dancing. Of that time Mahākāla Himself gives the following account:

¹ The relation between sound and its meaning is permanent. Language is not a mere matter of convention. A word denotes a thing because it must do so: Īśvara having so willed it.

² Vikṛti.

³ Akṣara means both a letter of the alphabet and "indestructible".

⁴ See *ante*.

⁵ Pralaya.

⁶ A Kalpa is a period between two dissolutions.

⁷ Śiva.

⁸ Demon.

⁹ That is, Śakti and Śiva, who though in fact one, manifest in these dual forms.

¹⁰ A class of Śaktis attendant on Kālī.

“Seeing that very wonderful and mad dance of the Mother of the world, my mind was so distracted with fear that (finding no other means of escape) I took shelter in the body of Herself of Universal form,¹ and then, entering the path of Suṣumnā,² I saw and heard (inside that luminous Brahman body) things which, O Devī, were all so wondrous that I have never seen or heard the like again, and which I have not even the power to describe. Who can count, O Devī, the countless millions of great Universes,³ which constantly move within Her body? Brahmās, Viṣṇus, and Maheśvaras⁴ with millions of arms, heads, and differing forms (not to speak of Brahmās, Viṣṇus, and Maheśvaras with four, five, or a thousand heads) exist in that body. They are all Creators, Preservers, and Destroyers of different Universes, and possessors of all great powers.⁵ O Devī, the sight of all these wonderful things overpowered my mind, and I forgot all (which had happened in the past. I even forgot myself, and) I wondered who I was (Great Devas were there, but none seemed to notice me). Nowhere was I asked by anybody who I was, (where I had been), and whence I came. O Devī, in the World of that Devī’s body I thus became forgetful, and doubts arose in my mind. I could remember nothing. Moving about in this way for a million years I (passed your navel region and) reached the lotus of your heart.⁶ The wonderful and beautiful sight which I saw there I have not the power, O Parameśvarī, to describe fully. There I saw the Śāstras which are the source of the Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa of Jīvas.⁷ Of that Śāstra body Āgama or Tantra (consisting of mantra) is the Paramātmā, Vedas are the Jīvātmā, Darśanas⁸ are the senses, Purāṇas are the body, and Smṛtis are the limbs. O fair-faced Devī, all the other Śāstras exist as hairs of Her body. In short, as the Jīvātmā is to the Paramātmā, so is the Veda to the Tantra. (That is to say, just as the existence of the mind or the Jīvātmā, according to the Nyāya Philosophy, depends on the existence of Ātmā, so the existence of Veda depends on

¹ Virāṭ.

² The Nāḍī, or channel of energy of that name. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and Arthur Avalon’s “Serpent Power”.)

³ Brahmāṇḍas.

⁴ There is not only one Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. Those which men worship are the Devas of this Universe, but there are countless Universes, each of which has its own trinity of Devas.

⁵ Aīśvarya—that is, the attributes of Īśvara.

⁶ That is, he passed the Maṇipūra cakra in its Universal form, and reached the heart (anāhata) centre of the Devī’s body, the universe. The brackets are the Author’s.

⁷ Religion and religious merit, wealth, desire and its fulfilment, and liberation. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.)

the existence of Tantra. Just as in the body of the Jīva Paramātmā is the Śakti¹ of pure consciousness, so in the body of the Śāstra Tantra is the Śakti of consciousness consisting of Mantras. Just as all activities of the Manaśakti² with Guṇas,³ flow constantly through the Jīvātmā, so all Vicāra Śaktis,⁴ consisting of knowledge varying according to competence⁵ caused by differences in the three Guṇas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are eternally seated in the Veda. Just as the ultimate goal of mind is immersion in the Parabrahman, and the end of the active forces, consisting of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, is to disappear altogether, so the ultimate goal of Veda is to be merged in Tantra through the knowledge of the omnipresence of Brahman. And the end of the different Adhikāras⁶ caused by differences in the Guṇas is to be totally destroyed.) Then, O Devī, I saw letters⁷ of dazzling brightness at the edges, the middle, and the roots of the petals of that lotus of Thy heart, embracing Śikṣā, Kalpa, Nirukta, Chandas,⁸ and all other minor Śāstras, givers of welfare to the three worlds. Then, O Devī, I saw, within the pericarp of Thy lotus, hundreds of groups of letters⁷ shining most brilliantly like millions of suns and moons, and surrounded by circles of the light of millions of great fires. Those luminous letters,⁷ with as their substance the true and lasting Parabrahman, shone with the brilliance of millions of suns, were cool like millions of moons, and radiant as millions of fires. O Devī, those luminous letters⁷ consisted of all knowledge, of all wonders, of all sacrifices,⁹ and of all places of pilgrimage.¹⁰ (That is to say, when the subject of Sādhana is the form of Mantras, the letters⁷ generate knowledge of the science of all things in the Brahmāṇḍa. It is a matter of everyday experience that wonderful events are brought about by changes produced inevitably in the laws of Nature by the great power of Mantraśakti,¹¹ which can make the impossible possible. The Sādhana of letters leads unfailingly to the vision of the supreme Devatā, a result which the

¹ Force, power, or active principle.

² Mind-power, or more strictly, Śakti in form of the lower mind or Manas.

³ Qualities. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.)

⁴ Powers of judgment and reasoning.

⁵ Adhikāra.

⁶ Adhikāra is competency. A Sādhaka is entitled to worship and to have knowledge according to such competency. This competency is affected by the predominance of particular Guṇas in the Sādhaka himself. When Brahmajñāna is attained, then all question whether a man is fit for this or that necessarily disappears. The establishment of Adhikāra is only a means to an end, and with the attainment of the end (spiritual knowledge) disappears.

⁷ Varṇa.

⁸ These are four Vedāṅgas, dealing with orthography, ritual, etymology, and prosody.

⁹ Yajñas.

¹⁰ Tīrthas.

performance of all the sacrifices like the *Aśvamedha*¹ and so forth cannot give. By the *Sādhana* of the great Mantra of letters one achieves at the same time the fruits of seeing and touching all places of pilgrimage. In fact, we go not too far in saying that places of pilgrimage themselves desire to be sanctified by the sight and touch of Great men² accomplished in Mantras. For a *Sādhaka's* body is not an ordinary material body, but is the permanent dwelling-house of Her who is the Mistress of all places of Pilgrimage,³ and who raises the fallen and grants liberation to the three worlds. O *Devī*, in these letters⁴ reside all religious merit,⁵ all righteousness,⁶ all knowledge, and all *Brahma-bliss*. (That is to say, by worshipping them one performs all acts of religious merit at one and the same time. One achieves by a single means all forms of righteousness which are the fruits of all religious acts; and one acquires that knowledge, which is the fruit of all righteousness—namely, that *Brahman* is omnipresent throughout the universe; for such an one the *Brahmāṇḍa*⁷ is filled with *Brahma-bliss*, which is the fruit of the knowledge of *Brahman*.) O *Maheśvarī!* these (Mantras) are evidence⁸ of the existence of the *Vedas* and the *Śāstras*, and all *Jīvas* are themselves the supreme energy⁹ of *Brahman* and the supreme blessing. That is to say, many may easily say that a spiritual *Śāstra* which speaks of fruit to be reaped in the next world is unauthoritative. But even unbelievers¹⁰ will shrink from calling a *Śāstra* unauthoritative the fruits of which are visible in this very world. What this self-evident *Śāstra* lays down as authoritative must also, as a matter of course, be considered as such by all people. Even believers¹¹ may sometimes be led to doubt the authority of *Veda* because they see not its effects. But if *Tantra* which produces visible effects admits that *Veda* or *Vedāṅga*, or any other *Śāstra*, is authoritative, then not even unbelievers can dispute it, for *Tantra* is self-evident. It is also self-evident that the letters¹² which are Mantras are a form of evidence of the existence of *Jīvas*.¹³ The use of the terms guttural, palatal, cerebral, and so forth, in classifying letters⁴ relates only to seats of pronunciation,¹⁴ and not to seats of generation.¹⁵ For instance, what is pronounced from the throat is called guttural, what is pronounced from

¹ The Vaidik horse-sacrifice.

² *Mahāpuruṣas*.

³ *Tīrthas*.

⁴ *Varṇa*.

⁵ *Puṇya*.

⁶ *Dharma*.

⁷ Universe.

⁸ *Pramāṇa*, *vide post*.

⁹ *Tejas*.

¹⁰ *Nāstika*.

¹¹ *Āstika*.

¹² Each individual letter is a Mantra.

¹³ Sound outwardly expressed manifests itself to the senses. As the organs of speech are not the seat of its generation, this indicates that there is an inner-manifestation, as to which see *post*.

the palate is called palatal, and so forth. The word pronunciation¹ also means *ut* (above), *charaṇa* (to cause to move)—that is, to make letters² which were moving below to move above. When that motion above is manifested outwardly, and is perceived by the sense of hearing, it is certain that the motion below has also an inward manifestation in the most subtle supersensual form. It is this deep truth which has been clearly expressed in the Śāstra as follows: In the Prapañcasāra³ it is said: “When through obstruction⁴ of the vocal passage a child utters indistinct sounds, it is Kulakuṇḍalinī, who, playing in the aperture of the Mūlādhāra and coiled round Suṣumnā, utters indistinct sounds repeatedly. It is the echo of this indistinct sound which comes out of the passage of the child’s throat.”

The Prayogaśāra says: “O Devī, at that time Antarātmā, the substance of which is sound,⁵ Himself utters sounds. It is these sounds of His which, in combination with each other, appear as letters.”

In the Śaradātilaka it is written: “Śabdabrahman⁶ exists in all things as consciousness. So it is this Śabdabrahman, the substance of which is consciousness, which exists in the bodies of living beings in the form of Kuṇḍalinī, and then appears as letters in prose, poetry, and so forth, being carried by air⁷ to the throat, palate, teeth, and other places.”

In the Viśvasāra Tantra there is the following: “Sadāśiva Himself has spoken of Him as Śabdabrahman. That Śabda (sound) is in the Anāhata Cakra.”

And in the second Paṭala of the same book it is said: “O beloved one! in the Jīva’s own body itself blissful Parabrahman exists as Śabdabrahman, whose substance is all Mantras.” All Mantras are manifestations⁸ of Kulakuṇḍalinī Herself, who is the Śabdabrahman, whose substance is consciousness. So that the fact that they are pronounced (outwardly manifested) from such places as the throat, palate, and so forth, does not prove that Śabda (sound) or Mantras are generated at such places. Although Brahman as Śabda is not in reality generated, yet it first appears at the Mūlādhāra. However that may be, what is known to us as Śabda (sound) or varṇa (letter) is the Śakti which gives life to Jīvas, so that without doubt Mantras which are Śakti⁹ are eternal evidence of the existence of Jīvas. Next it has been said that “Mantras are the supreme energy¹⁰ of Brahman”. According to philosophers, Śabda

¹ Uccāraṇa.

² Varṇa.

³ See vol. iii of the “Tāntrik Texts,” edited by Arthur Avalon.

⁴ This may also refer to incomplete formation.

⁵ Nāda.

⁶ Brahman as “sound” manifesting the Universe, which is its Brahma-

⁷ Vāyu.

out of which grow the fruit of the universe are eternally present in Her body. For this reason they are called Bijamantras (seed-mantras). Such a Mantra is the seed of Mantras, Yantras, Tantras, and Devatās. It is the seed of the creation, preservation, and destruction of the Universes, the maintenance of Jīvas' lives, Siddhi and Sādhana¹ of the four-fold aim of Puruṣa—namely, Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa,² and is also the most ancient, permanent, and eternal seed for the Śabda, which first puts forth its young shoot in Ākāśa. If Śabdabrahman had not gem-like eternally shone as Mantras on the other side of the sea of Samsāra,³ on the outside of the cauldron-shaped Universe beyond the reach of the mind and intellect⁴ of Suras, Asuras, Kinnaras,⁴ men (Naras), and the entire world of Jīvas; before the three eyes of the Guru of all things moving and non-moving, and in the body of Brahmamayī, who is beyond the reach of mind and speech—would the resplendent luminous waves of sound have to-day illumined all quarters, piercing the vacancy⁵ of space and scattering themselves throughout the Universe? However learned you and I may to-day become by the reading of commentaries and the like, the subtle aphorism⁶ of sound remains eternally hidden in the deep womb of Her who is the unfathomable, untraversable, and unbounded ocean of truth.⁷ None but She can make it known. He, however, whose wealth of Sādhana accumulated in many births has reached the stage of bearing fruit, is alone gratified by the taste of the immortalizing juice of that fruit, and acquires direct knowledge through sight of the luminous form of Mantra.

¹ They are the seed of Sādhana, initiating, maintaining it, and procuring its fruit (siddhi).

² See *ante*.

³ Buddhi.

⁴ Devas; their enemies the Asuras; and a class of the minor spirits called Devayonis.

⁵ Avakāśa.

⁶ Sūtra. A common form of Hindu literature is the statement of the essence of a subject-matter in the form of an extremely abbreviated aphorism (sūtra), the very brevity and consequent obscurity of which requires an extended commentary, and sometimes further notes or such.

CHAPTER XII

LETTERED AND UNLETTERED SOUND¹

ŚABDA, or sound, is of two kinds—namely, Dhvani and Varṇa.¹ What is expressed in the string of letters² from A to Kṣa³ is called Varṇa, and that which is not expressed by any alphabetical mark⁴ is called Dhvani. Difference of tone⁵ alone is the cause of this two-fold aspect of Śabda. Those who are learned in sound⁶ have divided it into these two classes but in reality there is no such difference in sound itself⁷. Fundamentally, Dhvani is the real substance,⁸ of which Śabda⁹ is only a manifestation¹⁰. This Dhvani is the subtle aspect of the Jīva's vital force,¹¹ which is consciousness. It is in the form of Dhvani that this Śākti appears in and disappears from a Jīva's body. Here it is necessary to expound the Śāstrik principle with some clearness. According to Āryas, Veda is not the production of any person, for it has no author. From Mahādeva himself to the Ṛṣis all are remembrancers of Veda, and none its author. Śāstra says that Bhagavān Himself, as the Avatāra,¹² Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and others, has only revealed the Veda in the mortal world. But it also has been already said: "Īśvara is the author of Veda." Again, Īśvara Himself says: "Śabdabrahman and Parabrahman are both My eternal bodies." We must now see how these two apparently mutually contradictory statements of the Śāstra may be reconciled. Every Mantra, be it Vaidik or Tāntrik, is an appearance¹³ of Brahman. Veda or Tantra, consisting of Mantras, is only a manifestation¹⁴ of Brahman. Therefore, it cannot

¹ The first or unlettered form of śabda (sound), or sound in its subtle form, is Dhvani. Lettered sound is called Varṇa, which means letter (see *post*).

² Akṣara.

³ The first and last letter of the Sanskrit alphabet.

⁴ Mātra.

⁵ Svara.

⁶ Śabda.

⁷ That is, the difference noted is a conventional one.

⁸ Padārtha.

⁹ Sound.

¹⁰ Parīṇāma, development of effect.

¹¹ Śākti.

¹² Avatāra is a descent of the Supreme. It may or may not be what is called an "incarnation". An Avatāra is an incarnation where there is a descent to the physical plane. A large number of Avatāras are non-material manifestations. In the case of Śrī Kṛṣṇa there was an incarnation. ¹³ Rūpa.

¹⁴ Svarūpavibhūti. Vibhū is one who is all-pervading, and Vibhūti is that which characterizes this higher nature. It is that which this nature displays which characterizes this higher nature. Thus the world is known as

consciousness, remembers the events of the past lives; so the child in Brahṁamayī¹ womb began, on the rising of consciousness, to remember all previous acts of creation, preservation, and destruction in other Kalpas.² Just as the memory of previous lives then arises of itself in the child's mind, so Śruti³ appeared of itself in the mind of Brahṁā. Again, as memory is the Ātma-Śakti⁴ in a Jīva's mind so Śruti is the Śakti of consciousness in Brahṁā's mind. The hidden state of this Śakti of consciousness is Dhvani, and its outward manifestation is sound.⁵ That Dhvani which is as it were the first shoot⁶ of sound is the Jīva's vital⁷ force.

In the Prapañcasāra it is said: "The Universe of immovable and movable things is linked together and pervaded by this Śakti, which is Dhvani. It is this Śakti which is called by such names as Nāda,⁸ Prāṇa,⁹ Jivaghoṣa,⁸ and so forth." Again: "It is this great Śakti whom Yogīs know as Kulakuṇḍalinī moving in the heart, and it is She who ever makes an indistinct and sweet murmuring sound,¹⁰ like the humming of a black bee, at the aperture¹¹ in the Mūlādhāra." It is with reference to this Dhvani that the Ṣaṭcakratattva has said:

"Kulakuṇḍalinī lustrous as the flash of a hundred lightnings resides in all hearts, and is ever immersed in play in the Mūlādhāra¹² lotus. She it is whose sweet constant murmuring humming sounds like that of a swarm of black bees intoxicated with a draught of honey, and who is Dhvani. Her voice it is which sounds in the words of soft poetry, and is clearly audible in styles of Bheda and Atibheda composition.¹³ Again, it is the heaving of the Dhvani which causes the alternate inspiration and expiration of all Jīvātmās in this infinite world. [By the above reference

¹ The Devī.

² The period between two dissolutions.

³ The revealed Scripture. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Here that which constitutes individuality.

⁵ Śabda.

⁶ That is, the earliest manifestation. Dhvani is unlettered sound.

⁷ Sañjivani.

⁸ Sound.

⁹ The vital force manifesting in breath.

¹⁰ Dhvani.

¹¹ The Devī lies close to the aperture in the Suṣumnā.

¹² The lowest cakra of that name. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and Arthur Avalon's "The Serpent Power.")

¹³ Bheda and Atibheda are two modes of composition (Alaṅkāra). Bheda is the mode in which difference is posited between things which are really the same. Thus, to say that a woman possesses celestial beauty not to be found on earth is bheda, because a distinction is made between the beauty of the woman, which is celestial, and terrestrial beauty, although no such distinction really exists. Atibheda, on the other hand, is the mode in which equality is posited between different things; as, for instance, to speak of a woman's beauty as a moon is atibheda.

s made to the Sthūla or gross form of Kulakuṇḍalinī. The book then proceeds to define her Sūkṣma or subtle form.] She who dwells within this gross form as the supreme extremely subtle Kalā,¹ who is consciousness shedding the sweetness of everlasting bliss and surpassing in beauty masses of lightning; She by whose light the whole visible sphere of the Universe is lighted, is that Parameśvarī Kulakuṇḍalinī, who is eternal knowledge, and the Īśvarī² of all."

Sādhakas will now understand that Kulakuṇḍalinī has two aspects—namely, a Sthūla, or gross form with attributes,³ in which, like the humming of a moving swarm of black bees, She indistinctly utters the fifty letters and a Sūkṣma, or subtle form, which is attributeless,⁴ and is existence, consciousness, and bliss.⁵ It is the Sthūla form appearing in different aspects as different Devatās, which is the presiding Devatā of all Mantras; and it is the Sūkṣma form, which is that one Devatā towards whom all Sādhakas' worship is directed. For this reason the door of the temple of the Mother of the World is not opened so long as Kulakuṇḍalinī, the snake sleeping in the bed of Svayambhu,⁶ is not awakened; and Siddhi in Mantra is not gained so long as the Mantra is not awakened.⁷ However that may be, we seek only to establish here that Śabda (sound), which is the manifestation⁸ of Dhvani, is nothing but a manifestation of the Śakti of consciousness itself, and Śabda is eternally present, full of lustre, in the lustrous eternal body of the Mother of the World. Because during creation it is manifested as the property⁹ of Ākāśa,¹⁰ it is not to be inferred that it is created with the creation of Ākāśa,¹⁰ and disappears with the dissolution¹¹ of the latter. Those, again, who believe that Ākāśa¹⁰ is a permanent thing can have no ground for objecting to our view. However much opinions may differ, it is certain that Veda consisting of Mantras is formed of Dhvani and Varṇa¹² together. For this reason, drawn by the Samādhi¹³ Yoga of Brahmā, Brahmamayī

¹ Mūlaprakṛti, which is here regarded as one with the Brahman.

² Female of Īśvara, "Lord".

³ Saṅga.

⁴ Nirguṇa.

⁵ Sat, cit, ānanda.

⁶ "The self-existent one," referring to the Linga of that name in the Mūlādhāra, around which Kuṇḍali is coiled.

⁷ The awakening of the Mantra is called Mantracaitanya. Unless the Mantra is awakened in and by the consciousness of the Sādhaka, the Mantra thus becoming a part and parcel of the consciousness of the Sādhaka himself it is mere dead sound and letter without fruit (Siddhi). It is true that Śakti is there as everywhere, but it must be rendered conscious or realized to the Sādhaka.

⁸ Literally, "effect".

⁹ Guṇa.

¹⁰ Space: ether.

¹¹ Pralaya

¹² Letters; that is, audible Dhvani.

appeared in His heart as Veda, which is the Śabdabrahman, and to instil into Him the notion of the process of creation, issued out of His nostrils. The phrase "Brahmā is the author of Veda" means that Brahmā is the author of the appearance of Veda in the sense that a Jīva is the author of his expiration and inspiration of breath. In truth, Veda eternally exists as Śabdabrahman,¹ and is not created by Brahmā. Thus Veda is not the creation of any.² The effect³ of the Dhvani of Kula-kūṇḍalinī in the body of Īśvara is Veda, and the effect of the Dhvani of Kulakūṇḍalinī in the body of Jīva is Śabda.⁴ In that Śabda is every form of Mantra, which is that which gives vitality to Jīva.

According to natural law, a great Mantra repeats⁵ itself when inspiration and expiration through the circular movement of the vital air of Jīva revolves the wheel of Dhvani. It is this Mantra which is called Ajapā-Mantra, and it is so called either because it repeats⁶ itself naturally without any effort on the part of Jīva, or because there is no other Japa⁶ of a Mantra which is superior to this one. This Ajapā is the full life-time of a Jīva.⁷ For this reason it is said: "Being Ajapā (one who does not repeat any Mantra) during Ajapā (life-time), I have neither done Japa of any Mantra nor done any Tapas.⁸ My Ajapā (life-time) is about to end, and yet my Ajapā (the state of being without Japa) does not end."⁹ As Brahmā when on the navel-lotus of Bhagavān thought of previous Kalpas,¹⁰ so a Jīva when in his mother's womb constantly thinks of his past lives. At that time waves of deep thought, such as, "Who am I?" "Where was I?" "Whence have I come?" "Whose am I?" "Who is mine?" and so forth, arise in the Jīva's mind. These waves of thought mingle with the Prāṇasakti.¹¹ That Prāṇasakti in its turn within the two Nāḍis Idā and Piṅgalā strikes and strikes again against the Kūṇḍalinī Cakra below the abdominal fire¹² of the belly. Stung by those blows dealt by Herself, the sleeping snake

¹ The sound or manifested Brahman.

² That is, it is apauruṣeya.

³ Parīṇāma.

⁴ Veda is Dhvani uttered by Brahmā, and Śabda is Dhvani uttered by Jīva.

⁵ Literally, "is made Japa of".

⁶ Vide last note and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ For the Mantra consists of the breathing and expiration which ceases at death.

⁸ Devotion, austerity, etc. As to Japa or "recitation" of Mantra, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁹ A play on the word Ajapā. Ajapā means "life-time" because life exists only so long as it is repeated. Next Ajapā may be made to mean "one who does not perform Japa," and also "not Japa"—i.e., the state of being without Japa.

Kulakuṇḍalinī then hisses loudly.¹ The Mātrkāś,² or fifty letters³ of the alphabet from A to Kṣa³ are only the manifested state of that missing Dhvani.⁴ It is with the help of these letters³ that the thoughts of the Jīva in the womb relating to past lives is reflected in waves of language;⁵ and then the Jīva's mind⁵ sees with mental eyes and hears with mental ears.⁶ When at birth upon the bursting of the womb the doors of all the senses of the Jīva are opened, then that internal Dhvani⁴ passes out through the passage of the throat. When Jīva sitting in the dark prison-chamber of the womb meditates on the deep past history of itself,⁷ then, as in the case of dream, it is mind alone which works and judges everything. The final conclusion to which that judgment leads is also related in the Śāstras as follows:

In the Bhagavatīgītā in Mahābhāgavata Devī says to Himālaya:

“Jīva, dejected at the remembrance of the work of his bodies in previous births, then bethinks himself over the matter as follows:

“1. In this way suffering many sorrows in previous lives, I have again taken birth on earth; for whilst in the Samsāra I failed to worship Bhagavatī Durgā, the Dispeller of misery, but merely maintained relatives with money earned by unfair means.

“2. If, however, I am this time delivered from any suffering in the womb,⁸ no work will I do but the service of Maheśvarī Durgā, ever worshipping Her with self-restraint.

“3. By my useless desires for wife, children and the like, I have over and over again bound myself to the Samsāra,⁹ and thus worked only evil for myself. Therefore is it that I am suffering this intense pain in the womb. I therefore do resolve that I will no more uselessly serve this Samsāra.

“4. Thus suffering from various sorrows according to his Karma,¹⁰ the Jīva enveloped in the womb is expelled by the labour wind¹¹ and crushed through the pelvic bone. And then, widening his inner path,

¹ Garjana. Literally, “roars”.

² A name for the letters as embodying mother-sound.

³ Varṇa.

⁴ Subtle sound (see *ante*).

⁵ Vāk.

⁶ The meaning appears to be that, though being in the womb, the Jīva has no articulate speech, yet all thinking is by the aid of words whether expressed or not. At that stage it is the mind and not the outward senses which are working.

⁷ Literally, “on the profound past tattva of his Ātmā”.

⁸ According to Hindu notions, the child in the womb endures great pains, which are forgotten on birth.

⁹ See *ante*. ¹⁰ Actions and their effects. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

and smearing himself all over with fat and blood, he falls on earth, as were, a sinner in some terrible Hell. Whereupon, deluded by My Māy the Jīva forgets all the sorrows experienced during his stay in the womb and then exists for some little time an insignificant mass of flesh.

"5. So long as the outside of the child's suṣumnā nāḍī¹ remain covered with mucus,² he cannot utter words with clearness."

We are here obliged to make mention of a modern saying in this connection, hoping to be pardoned by Sādhakas for this digression.

Nowadays a number of poets and men learned in its science say that the excruciating pain of the mother in child-birth has no other cause than Īśvara's despotic will; for, as He is Almighty, could He not, had He so desired, have provided an easy form of delivery instead of one which is very painful both for the child and its mother? Why, because a Jīva is to be born, should another Jīva causelessly suffer such horrible pain? We say that no such questions can be put to Him. For in the first place, in the vast scheme of Bhagavān's designs, which are like a great ocean, the individual counts for less than a mere bubble; and secondly His work consists in "killing seven serpents with one blow"³. Who, then, can say that what you and I consider as your or my woe or weal is not linked with the weal and woe of hundreds of Jīvas in this infinite world of moving and unmoving things? Did Mantharā⁴ think that her words could have any other consequence beyond the gaining of Kaikeyī's favour? It was Bhagavān (Rāma) alone, He who for whose fourteen years' exile in the wood all Devas had conspired, seeking the help of wicked Sarasvatī⁵ who understood what the effect of her words would be; for He is the dispenser of all effects in the universe. Mantharā did not expect anything from her words besides the fulfilment of a selfish end. Those words, however, brought about Rāmacandra's exile in the woods for fourteen years with His younger brother and wife;⁶ the untimely death of Mahārāja Daśaratha;⁷ the widowhood of Kauśalyā, Sumitrā, and Kaikeyī; the severe brahmacya of Bharata; the killing of Mārica; the abduction of Sita; the death of Jaṭayu; the killing of Vāli; the bridging of the sea; the burning of Lāṅkā;

¹ The "nerve" of that name. (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). ² Śleṣma.

³ The Bengali expression for killing two birds with one stone.

⁴ Maid-servant of Kaikeyī, wife of Daśaratha and stepmother of Rāma, whose exile she caused when at the instance of Mantharā she requested Daśaratha, her husband, to make, Bharata, her son king instead of Rāma.

⁵ The Devas wanted Rāma exiled that he might go and destroy Rāvaṇa and the Rākṣasas. Sarasvatī is here spoken of as wicked (duṣṭa), as the authoress of Mantharā's evil suggestions.

⁶ Śakti.

⁷ This and the following are all incidents in the Rāmāyaṇa.

the wounding of Lakṣmaṇa with śaktiśela;¹ the destruction of Rāvaṇa, with his whole family; the ordeal through fire of Sītā; the gaining of heaven² by the Devas, and so forth. These incidents, further, are but a few of the greater waves in the untraversable sea of Rāmalīlā.³ Who can measure the destinies of the millions of Jīvas which are linked with this Rāmalīlā³? The Rāmalīlā³ was but the gateway through which those destinies issued. In a Jīva's līlā,⁴ also, a similar mutual connection of fates always exists, with this difference only, that in Bhagavān's līlā⁴ the destinies concerned are in number millions, whilst in your or my līlā they are only hundreds. Who can say that the destiny which, in the course of its production of fruits brings about the terrible suffering of the child at birth, is not connected with the destiny of the Mother? Secondly, the question why Īśvara did this instead of doing that cannot be asked of Him. We cannot object and ask: "Why has He created eyes in man's face instead of in his back?" For, had He created eyes in man's back, it might have been asked: "Why has He created eyes in man's back instead of in his face?" One can question in this way anything. Īśvara never escapes these interrogations, which are the natural characteristics of ignorance. A Jīva devoid of the knowledge of the Self⁵ is ever ignorant to Him who possesses all knowledge. So long as the Jīva, as it were a drop of water, does not mingle with the ocean, which is Śiva, there is no end to the former's interrogations. Śiva gratifies the Jīva's curiosity to the extent of telling him that only which He has been pleased to divulge in the Śāstra spoken by Himself. The Medical Śāstras may be ignorant of that purpose of His which is served by woman's labour-pains, but it is known to the Sādhana-śāstra.⁶

In Tantra, Bhagavān says: "O Devī, at this critical ninth or tenth month of pregnancy the Jīva is struck by the powerful labour-wind,⁷ and issues through the channel like an arrow let loose from a bow. Senseless from the womb, he does not know of his fall. The force of the labour-wind and the pressure of the generative channel at the time of birth make the Jīva forget all that which he had revolved in his mind during his stay in the womb."

In the Prapañcasāra it is said: "The more sinful the Jīva is, the greater is the pain which he suffers in issuing from his mother's womb. Extremely wonderful is the history of men's Karma guided by the will of the Lotus-born."⁸

¹ A missile named Śakti.

² Svarga.

³ Rāma's play on earth.

⁴ Play.

⁵ Ātmajñāna.

⁶ The Tantra which is called by that name.

One sometimes meets a person who was formerly half paralyzed, or was attacked with some other disease equally or even more serious, or who was injured and almost died through violent delirium, but who has returned to life, and is now free from disease. He, however, cannot now recognize his wife, son, or daughter, or others, or his possessions. Although to this man's friends he still possesses all he had, yet the man himself is not aware that he has anything which he can call his own. This is a kind of rebirth in one's life.

When we find that such deep knowledge as one acquires through impressions received in early life is lost in old age, maturity, or even adolescence, it is a matter for no wonder that the light impressions on the child's soft mind should disappear under the grinding oppression of the horrible pain of birth, and that the terrible horror of the frightful swooning and insensibility then experienced should dispel all memory of past events. Loss of memory is possible whenever the mind and brain, which are the store-houses of all knowledge, are violently disturbed through any cause. If by any violent shock the order in which the picture impressions lie arranged in successive layers in the mind is in any way disturbed, the tie with all these impressions is loosened, and the threads which bind them to each other are scattered one knows not where. The pain of childbirth has been ordained only that the trace of past events may be dispelled from the Jīva's mind. Jīva's assumption of a body is in order that he may suffer the consequence of past sin. It is not that the punishment is suffered owing to the assumption of body, but, as Śāstra holds, assumption of body takes place owing to the necessity of suffering punishment. It is, therefore, useless to regret the assumption of body. Things have been so arranged according to the desire of the all-good Devī, who is full of goodness, that a Jīva suffers the consequences of sin at such times, in such manner, and by such means, as may clear of obstruction on the path of his welfare. This is why it is often found that Jīvas whose destiny¹ is almost worked out die of the very pain of childbirth in places of pilgrimage,² and other seats of liberation, and are thus themselves liberated.

As regards the question why the mother suffers pain, the answer is that the mother's destiny¹ is alone responsible for the suffering. We must understand that she is engaged in giving birth simply because she may thereby suffer the fruits of her destiny,¹ and not that she suffers pain in order that she may give birth to a child. In that market in which the commodity is destiny¹ there does not, and

¹ Adṛṣṭa. That is the "unseen" cause of man's fate, which he has himself produced through previous Karma.

cannot, exist any consideration of relationship. In this domain of merciless creatures of stone, nobody, be he or she father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife, or anyone else, cares for another. And yet there does exist a strong, intimate, and mysterious mutual connection between such stones, like the mutual attraction between iron and magnet.¹ Both are hard to the utmost, and yet the two are in thorough union. But if destiny² separates them, then in a moment all connection ceases, and the hard heart of the stone breaks through its own heat.³ The stone-mother breaks into pieces through the heat of her grief,⁴ but her offspring, the stone-child, driven by its own destiny, has not one moment in which to think of the suffering of its mother.⁵ For this reason I was saying that in this stony domain all are stones according to the behest of the Daughter of Stone. Here the child does not suffer because of the mother, nor does the mother suffer because of the child. Each one follows his own path.

It is only at a crossing that one meets another for a short while. Then Māyā, the guide, often establishes relationships "dearer than life" between them under the sweet and enchanting influence of which the traveller is made to forget the weariness of the journey, and adroitly taken by Her Māyā to far-away abodes, sometimes in Heaven,⁶ and sometimes in Hell.⁷ Śāstra has appeared in order that the traveller may surmount this forgetfulness, and that he be reminded now and then of the journey; and it is in order so to remind him of the pains of the journey, to bring to his memory the pangs which torture the depths of the traveller's tired heart, that Śāstra has spoken to us in the Samsāra of the good resolves which he had made during his stay in his mother's womb.

It is only when a Sādhaka's mind has been perfectly cleansed by devotion⁸ that he can, on hearing the gracious relation of Śāstra, recall such resolves to his mind. It was with a heart pained with such recall of past and unfulfilled resolve that a Sādhaka sang:

"I am, O Mother, O liberatrix, a debtor at Thy feet.

O Mother, I am helpless, having forsaken adoration and worship."⁹

¹ Each person on this world works out his own destiny through others, and is thus brought into relationship with those who are associated with him by Karma. The attraction which binds one to the other manifests in worldly relationships.

² Adrṣṭa. That is the "unseen" cause of man's fate, which he has himself produced through previous Karma.

³ That is, it suffers. ⁴ That is, she is overwhelmed with grief.

⁵ In the working out of fate there is no reason why the mother should not suffer in birth if that be her destiny. Relationships temporarily established at the crossing-points of different lives will not affect this.

⁷ Naraka.

O Mother, I die through eating the poison of worldly enjoyment.¹

Suffering pains in the womb, I said: 'This time I go to the world that I may adore Thee.

I will remain at my own place² as a good child, and will offer three-leaved twigs of bael³ at the beauteous feet of the Mother.'

Now, having fallen on earth, I remain, O Mother! fallen⁴ Through forgetfulness of Thee. O Mother, O deliverer of the fallen,

I have not performed, nor can I now perform, Sādhana.

O Durgā, Mother! I can no longer bear my sorrow.

Good for nothing is Dāśarathi.⁵

What shall I do, O Śankari? I cannot control my mind.

Now, O Mother! I pray that Thou mayest bind the elephant-like mind

With the rope of Thy own high quality,⁶ and deliver me, O Devī, of dishevelled hair,⁷ from this bondage to the world."

Severely beaten and oppressed by the waves of a boundless sea of sorrows, the Sādhaka has here fully opened his heart, and with tears in his eyes said: "I have not done, nor can I now do, Sādhana. O Durgā, Mother, I can no longer bear my sorrow." In these few words the Sādhaka has expressed the insufferable mental agony which a Sādhaka feels when he falls from Sādhana, and is burnt in the flaming torments of Samsāra. Having relieved himself of such an outpouring, he moves, as it were, a cloud freed from its burdens of water in some invisible sky. There are many with poetic talent, but to draw such a living picture of the sufferer is the work of a living Sādhaka, who has gained such power⁸ from Sādhana of the Mother of the World, and not the work of some unconscious poet,⁹ with his idle pictures of leaves and creepers. Blessed are you, oh conscious Dāśarathi, the neck jewel of the land of Bengal.

¹ Viṣaya.

² Svapada, which expresses the same idea as Svarāj. All the sufferings of Jiva follow from neglect of this.

³ Tripatra. Bael twigs, with three leaves, are offered in worship.

⁴ A play on the word "fallen," which here means firstly fallen from the womb or born, and then degraded.

⁵ The celebrated Bengali poet and author of this song.

⁶ Her quality as deliverer.

⁷ Kali and other destructive (Samhāriṇi) forms of the Devi are so dishevelled.

⁸ Śakti.

⁹ That is, one not

Blessed is your musical Sādhana, or the modulation ¹ of the Dhvani ² of Kulakuṇḍalinī. You have said that you are a debtor to the Mother. But this account of your debt has made the entire race of Sādhakas indebted to you.

Many are experts in falling from Sādhana, but very few have the good fortune to be capable of such heart-felt repentance. It is, however, in order to secure such good fortune that the Mother of the World has, in spite of the Jīva's forgetfulness of the events of past times and of the life in the womb, repeatedly pointed to them in the mirror of Śāstra, saying: "My child, you have forgotten all that you said. Pain of birth has been created that there may be this forgetfulness, according to your Karma."

However that may be, our object here in introducing a discussion of this subject is to show this much only, that the appearance of consciousness in the Jīva is nothing but the appearance of the eternally existing Śakti of Dhvani ² in the child in the womb, and that the vital Śakti of the Jīva is nothing but Dhvani in the form of Ajapā-Mantra. Through impressions acquired in previous births, a Jīva forms words mentally to himself while in the womb. This is why the Śāstra has said: "Jīva, then, himself thinks and speaks in his mind."³ This initial mental process manifests later as crying and the like after birth. Even the commencement of such crying is made whilst in the womb. At the time of birth the Jīva in the womb is greatly agitated. As he sits within the womb, all his limbs are repeatedly shaken. A feeling of weariness, which spreads all over the body, makes the child yawn. He swoons at every moment, and heaves sighs. Steeped in the deep darkness of the womb, the Jīva, on discovering himself to be in such terrible danger, becomes desirous of crying. All the inner processes necessary for such an act are performed at that time; it is only the outer process which is begun after birth. That process is as follows: The extremely subtle state of (that which subsequently appears as) a word ⁴ is called Parā, and issues from the Mūlādhāra.⁵ The less subtle state, when it reaches the heart,⁶ is called Paśyantī. The still less subtle state which exists in conjunction with⁷ Buddhi⁸ is known as Madhyamā. Lastly, there is the gross state of sound in which it issues from the throat of the Jīva, who now cries out. This state is known as Vaikharī, and it is at this stage and in this state of

¹ Mūrcchhanā.

³ See *ante*.

² Power of subtle sound (see *ante*).

⁴ Vākya.

⁵ For these and other centres in Tāntrik Yoga, see Arthur Avalon's "The Serpent Power".

⁷ Samvukta.

sound that the child's cry becomes clearly audible. Therefore is it that the string of letters which exist (as subtle sound) in the Jīva's Suṣumnā¹ are (not produced by), but merely manifested by means of the outward pressure of the vital air.² Although all letters³ exist in subtle forms in the perpetual Dhvani in the Suṣumnā,⁴ yet they cannot issue at the same time that Kulakuṇḍalinī, whose substance is consciousness, makes Her appearance. For so long as the paths along which the current of sound flows from the Mūlādhāra to the vocal orifice is not divided, so long letters cannot manifest in distinct forms, because those parts of the body are seats of the manifestation of letters.

Mantras are in all cases manifestations⁵ of Kulakuṇḍalinī Herself—She whose substance is all letters³ and Dhvani, and who is the Paramātmā Itself.⁶ Therefore, the substance of all Mantras is consciousness, though their appearance and expression are in words. As, notwithstanding the existence of consciousness in all things, it does not manifest without such processes as the union of blood and semen and the like; so, although the substance of Mantras is consciousness, that consciousness is not perceptible without the union of the Sādhaka's Śakti derived from Sādhana with Mantraśakti. Hence it has been said in the Śāradātilaka: "Although Kulakuṇḍalinī, whose substance is Mantras, shines brilliant as lightning in the Mūlādhāra of every Jīva, yet it is only in the lotuses of the hearts of Yogīs that She reveals Herself and dances in Her own joy. (In other cases, though existing in subtle form, She does not reveal Herself.) Assuming the bodily appearance of a coiling serpent, that Devī coils round Svayambhu Śankara⁷ in the manner of the spirals of a conch-shell (in three and a half coils). Her substance is all Vedas, all Mantras, and Tattvas.⁸ She is all good, and the extremely subtle, perceptible⁹ Parameśvarī. She is Mother of the three forms of energy,¹⁰ and Śabdabrahman Itself."

Now, Sādhaka, remember that passage in the Yoginī Tantra in which it is said: "Mantras are proof of the existence of all Jīvas,¹¹ and

¹ Literally, in the yantra of the Suṣumnā, the Nāḍi of that name (see *ante*).

² Prāṇavāyu.

³ Varṇa.

⁴ The "nerve" of that name.

⁵ Vibhūti (See *ante*).

⁶ That is, Kuṇḍalī, Paramātmā, Svarūpiṇī, and Varṇadhvanimayī,

⁷ That is, the liṅga of Śiva so named in the Mūlādhāra.

⁸ Here all things.

⁹ Pratyakṣa. Derived from prati before, akṣa sense; that is perceptible to any sense according to the form of her manifestation.

¹⁰ Tejas, that is, Moon, Sun, and Fire.

are the supreme energy¹ of Brahman and the Supreme Good.”² “Those Mantras consisting of energy are beyond all Māyā. (For unless Mantra³ had been above Māyā, it would not have been possible for Mantraśakti to destroy the process of cause and effect in the world. It is not to be thought of that a subordinate should defeat by its own power the person to whom he is subordinate. It is, therefore, again said): All Mantras are destroyers of Māyā. (One who is entangled in Māyā can never sever its bonds.) Mantras are all blissful. (That is to say, when Mantraśakti is awakened, then all forms of bliss which may be had from the attainment of any object in the world are enjoyed. And for this reason a second adjective is given, it being said) that Mantras are full of Brahma-bliss. (That is to say, there is nothing in the world in which Brahman does not exist, and there is no bliss which is unattained on the attainment of Brahma-bliss. It has, therefore, been again said): Mantras are full of perfect bliss. (That is to say, She, who is Mantra,⁴ is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and the sole centre of all bliss in the universe. Whoever, therefore, attains Her through Siddhi in Mantra lacks no form of bliss. It is this state of perfect bliss which is called liberation whilst in the state of a Jīva.⁵ For this reason another adjective is applied to the Mantra, which is), Mantra is that highest good which is Brahma-nirvāṇa—that is to say, Kaivalya-liberation itself). Mantras are all Māyā,⁶ all Vidyā, all Tapas, all Siddhi.⁷ (Just as Brahman Himself, though without attributes, is yet the Lord of all attributes⁸ and all attributes;⁹ so Mantra, notwithstanding that it is above all Māyā, is the seat of the manifestation of Māyā, and is all Māyā. Mantrasādhana¹⁰ is the great cause which enables a Sādhaka to accomplish wonders by means of Māyā. By the words “Mantra is all Vidyā” is meant that Mantra is the cause of the divisions of Ādyāśakti¹¹ into the aspects of Mahāvidyā, Siddhividya, Upavidyā, Vidyā, and so forth, according to the different forms¹² of Vidyā. It is by virtue of Mantra-Sādhana¹³ that Sādhakas see the manifestation of Her different aspects. Or, Mantras are Vidyā because by

¹ Brahmatejas.

² See *ante*. The quotation from the Yoginī Tantra is continued from this place.

³ Literally, “the Tattva of Mantra”.

⁴ Literally, “She who is the Svarūpa of Mantra”.

⁵ Jīvanmukti.

⁶ Sarvamāyāmaya.

⁷ That is, all Vidyā (as to which see *post*), devotion, austerity, etc., and achievement (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁸ Guṇa.

⁹ Guṇamaya.

¹⁰ That is, Sādhana with Mantra.

¹¹ Primal Śakti.

¹² Tattvas

Mantrasādhana one easily acquires the fourteen forms of worldly knowledge with their sixty-four branches, as also Brahma-knowledge,¹ which destroys all sins. Mantras are all Tapas,² because by their grace one acquires, without subjection of the body to hardships, the religious merit,³ which is otherwise only acquired through physical austerities. Mantras are all Siddhi, because there is no Siddhi in the world which cannot be acquired by a Sādhana with Mantra.) ”⁴

“Mantras are all forms of liberation. (That is to say, all forms of liberation bestowed by the Devatā he worships, whether Sālokya, Sārūpya, Sārṣṭi, Sāyujya,⁵ or Nirvāṇa, are attainable by Mantrasādhana; for Mantra is itself liberation.⁶ He who wishes to ascertain the depth down to a particular point of an unfathomable ocean must descend to such a point. So a Sādhaka who desires a particular form of liberation must attain Siddhi in a Sādhana suitable for its acquisition. Just as the sea can from its fullness supply with ease water in any quantity from a mere pailful to a mass great enough to deluge the universe, so Mantra, which is replete with liberation, can grant to the Sādhaka any form of it from the lowest Siddhi to the supreme Nirvāṇa. Mantra is truly Brahman, who is light⁷ and perpetual liberation. Differences in effect produced by Mantrasādhana are due to differences in such Sādhana. Sādhakas will now be able to say whether Mantra, which is unchanged⁸ even in Nirvāṇa,⁹ should be considered to be a more worldly physical sound, or Brahman Itself as the fourth state of consciousness.¹⁰) Mantras are all Vedas.¹¹ (That is to say, if a Sādhaka attains perfect Siddhi in even a single Mantra, he becomes with ease possessed of the spiritual knowledge which is acquired by learning all the Vedas, with all allied matters; or he can perform with his own Mantra all the rites which are performed with different Mantras.) Mantras are all worlds.¹² (That

¹ Brahnavidyā.

² Tapomaya.

³ Dharma.

⁴ That is, Sādhana with Mantra.

⁵ These are qualified forms of Mukti (liberation) viz., dwelling in the same abode with the Devatā worshipped, the assumption of his form and powers and unity with Him. Nirvāṇa is unqualified Mukti.

⁶ Muktimaya.

⁷ Jyotih.

⁸ Literally, “whose Svarūpa is not changed”.

⁹ Because the Mantra is the Brahman.

¹⁰ Turiya caitanya. Turiya comes from catur (four) and ca (the ca of catur being dropped), and is the fourth state (avasthā) of consciousness. Sāyaṇa says that Turiya is tāraka (deliverer). According to the Vedāntasāra, it is that state in which the Brahman exists without upādhi (limiting conditions). Yadanupādhitan caitanyam tat turiyam iti cyāyate. Śruti says that it is thus: Śāntam (peace), Śīyam (excellence), and Advaitam (non-duality). (See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.)

¹² Sarvalokamaya. In Mantra are all

¹¹ Sarvavedamaya.

is to say, Mantraśakti can, at the Sādhaka's desire, reach and operate in all the fourteen worlds, and, penetrating through all their barriers, merge the Sādhaka in Itself.¹) In Mantra are all enjoyments.² (That is to say, whatever things are enjoyed by Sādhakas, are all produced by Mantraśakti³; or in Mantraśakti alone Sādhakas find all the enjoyments and happiness which others obtain from wife, children, and other worldly objects; or through the influence of the intense universe-consuming power of Mantra all enjoyments become favourable to Siddhi.⁴ Mantras are all Śāstras. (That is to say, after Mantraśakti has been acquired there is no necessity to know any Śāstra.)

“Mantras are all forms of Yoga. (That is to say, there is no form of Yoga which cannot be accomplished by Mantrasādhana.)”

“O Devī, my sight was paralyzed by the powerful splendour of the light⁵ of this mass of Mantras and Śāstras borne on every petal of the lotus of Thy heart. I then sank into the sea of unconsciousness, which is delusion.⁶ On recovery from that swoon, I again saw that mass of Mantras resplendent as the sun, as one who has been steeped in the deep darkness of night views the brilliant morning sunrise. By the grace of Mahākālī, the Deity presiding over⁷ all Mantras, I have attained Siddhi, and have become versed in all Śāstras.”

The string of fifty letters,⁸ from A to Kṣa, which are the Mātrkā,⁹ “is eternal, unbeginning and unending, and Brahman itself”. This great saying is the gist of all Tantras. Lest through human error the pronunciation of any letters⁸ should be lost or distorted, Vidhātā¹⁰ has created alphabets,¹¹ and put them into writing. Bṛhaspati¹² says: “Because Jīva is prone to error before he is even six months old, Vidhātā¹⁰ has created all Akṣaras,¹¹ and put them into writing in their due order.” Sādhakas should understand Akṣaras¹¹ to be created by Vidhātā in the same way as the Vedas are created by Him.¹³ Vidhātā¹⁰ has created the forms¹⁴ of written letters in resemblance to the forms seen by Maheśvara in the lotus of Māheśvarī's heart.

¹ That is, the Mantra can procure Nirvāṇa for the Sādhaka.

² Sarvabhogamaya.

³ The power of Mantra.

⁴ Success.

⁵ Tejas.

⁶ Moha.

⁷ Adhiṣṭhātrī, which is previously described as the sthūla form.

⁸ Varṇa.

⁹ Mothers, a name for the letter as embodying sound produced by Mother Kuṇḍalinī.

¹⁰ Brahmā.

¹² Guru of the Devas.

¹¹ Akṣara.

¹³ That is, He does not really create them, but they issue from Him as part

That the Bindu, Mātrā,¹ and Rekhā in the alphabet are all really Brahman is clearly shown in that which the Kāmadhenu and other Tantras say as to the identity of the letters from A to Kṣa, with the Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa; and other Devas and Devīs are presiding Devatās of those lines and points. In fact, the writing which we in ordinary use know as Akṣara (alphabet) is nothing but the Yantra of the undecaying Akṣara Brahman.² Just as in Sādhana forms made of earth or stone are used as Devatās, so in writing Yantras made of lines are used as Akṣaras.³ When, by virtue of Sādhana, Mantraśakti is awakened, the presiding Devatā of every line of the resplendent linear form (as it were an image) breaks through that form, and later, when Siddhi in the Mantra has been acquired, the Devatā of worship who presides over all Mantras, considered as a whole, and who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, gratifies Her devotees by the revelation of Her very Self.⁴

At dawn the powerful spreading rays of the sun pierce the deep, dark night, and are slowly followed by the orb itself, as it were a mass of heated gold reddening the summit of the Mount of sunrise.⁵ Great Yogīs, who are immersed in Sandhyā⁶ prayer, see in the centre of that luminous orb the beautiful form of Sūryadeva, seated on a red, full-blown lotus. In the same way, at the blessed appearance of dawn of Brahmamayī's⁷ grace, the fierce light⁸ of Mantra dawns in the Sādhaka's heart, rending the darkness of delusion⁹ of the deadly night of ignorance,¹⁰ and fills the entire universe with the joyous love of the supreme Devatā. Then successive companies of Devas show themselves unsought in the petals of the Sādhaka's thousand-petalled lotus. At the conclusion of the full display of Her power,¹¹ Brahmasanātani who is perfect and eternal Brahman, reveals Herself in the form worshipped by the Sādhaka in the midst of a circle of light overspreading the assembly of Devas and Devīs.

¹ Bindu is the dot which indicates the nasal breathing Anusvāra. Mātrā is the upper part of a letter or the headline; and Rekhā is the lines forming the letter itself.

² The word Akṣara etymologically means *a* (not), and *kṣara* (decaying).

³ Yantra, which literally means an "instrument," here means the lines of a letter. As a stone image is used to represent the Devatā, so the lines, etc., which go to make up the written alphabetical characters are used to denote the Devatā, which manifests as letters.

⁴ Svasvarūpa.

⁵ The sun rises from the top of Udayācala, or the Mount of rising (sunrise), and goes and descends to the Mount of sunset (astācala).

⁶ A rite performed thrice daily at morn, noon, and eve (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁷ The Devi's.

⁸ Tejas.

⁹ Moha

¹⁰ Avidyā

Immersed in the great sea of self-realization,¹ which is the Kaivalya² of Her who is Kaivalya itself, the Sādhaka, in the enjoyment of the sleep of Brahman-bliss, rests in the bed of consciousness in the bosom of the great deep Peace. This it is which is the undecaying nature³ of Akṣaras (letters). In fact, Akṣara, or written Mantra, is the same thing as Devatā in image, or Yantra. By the force or lack of force of the Sādhaka's Sādhana, the Devatā appears therein and disappears therefrom. Varṇa, Nāda, Vindu, vowel and consonant in a Mantra, denote different appearances of the Devatā. This is, of course, known to Sādhakas proficient in the knowledge of Mantras; but as the matter is strictly one to be learnt from Gurus only, we are unable to deal with it here. Certain aspects or Vibhūti⁴ of the Devatā are inherent in certain letters,⁵ but perfect Śakti appears only in a whole Mantra, and not in any disjointed letter.⁶ For this reason, any word or letter cannot be a Mantra.⁷ The Mantra alone in which the playful Devatā has revealed one of Her particular aspects is capable of revealing that aspect. Hence that Mantra is called in Śāstra the Mantra of that particular aspect. Bhagavān, the Guru of all Mantras and Siddhis and creator of all things, has therefore said to Bhagavatī: "It is certain that the form of a particular Devatā will appear from the particular Mantra of which that Devatā is the presiding Deity,⁸ for a Devatā's body is formed out of Bijamantra." In the Kāmadhenu Tantra it has been said: "If a Sādhaka contemplates with all his power the Devī, according to the Bija of individual Devatās, and Prafulla and Kālikā (particular Mantraśaktis), then from that Bija itself appear Śakti, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, and other Devas. From Bija is manifested the immaculate Supreme Brahman. How can Hari or Sadāśiva appear in a Sādhaka's heart without contemplation of Bija, for the eternal Devī, appearing as Bija, is the Genetrix of even Sadāśiva?" All the fruits of accomplishment⁹ which are borne by the creeper¹⁰ of a Sādhaka's Sādhana depends on the great Mantraśakti

¹ Bhāva: that consciousness which is the experience of the Kaivalya state. Bhāva literally means existence, and then feeling, etc., the term being here loosely used for such experience.

² Liberation.

³ Svarūpa—that is, the true nature or aspect.

⁴ See *ante*.

⁵ It is not merely the whole Mantra which is the Devatā, though, as pointed out later, perfect Śakti appears only in a whole Mantra. Thus, in the Māyā-Mantra—viz., "Hrīṅ," H=Śiva, R=fire, Ī=Māyaśakti. Each letter is thus a Devatā, and the whole Mantra is the Devatā Tripurasundarī, the meaning being that Māyā is dissolved in the fire of knowledge.

⁶ Varṇa.

⁷ Each of the letters is, as above stated, a Mantra. What is here meant is that it is not every Mantra which reveals a particular aspect sought. One must have recourse to that particular Mantra which is that aspect.

¹⁰ The Bija Mantra, which is described (see *ante*) as the Sthūla form.

appearing in the form of Bija.¹ Śāstra has therefore specified the rules and injunctions relating to the sowing of this Bija,² according to place, time, and person. Mantravicāra, Mantroddhāra,³ and the like, are prescribed in order that it may be ascertained what Mantra should be selected, and then, on selection, in which field and according to what method it should be sown in order that it may speedily have good fruit under the special influence of the Devatā. For this purpose reference is had to such matters as the zodiacal constellations,⁴ star,⁵ the planets, and the ascending and descending modes of the moon,⁶ conjunctions,⁷ and so forth, which exist as forces operating in the body of the Sādhaka.⁸

In the Viśvasāra Tantra it has been said: "Wise men should know Mantras to be of four kinds, according to the distinctive nature of the Cakra⁹—namely, Siddha, Sādhya, Susiddha, and Ari. Of these, a Siddha Mantra, when it has been the subject of due Sādhana, becomes Siddha¹⁰ in due time (that is, the time specified in the Śāstra for Siddhi in respect of that particular Mantra). A Sādhya Mantra⁶ becomes Siddha¹⁰ after a long time through both Japa¹¹ and Homa.¹² A Susiddha Mantra¹³ becomes Siddha¹⁰ the moment it is received (from the Guru; but its fruit appears according to the Sādhaka's Sādhana), and a Ripu Mantra¹⁴ lays the axe at the root of Siddhi." "Know Siddhamantras

¹ Bijarūpiṇī.

² Bija means seed.

³ Mantroddhāra is the search for and finding out of a Mantra for the purposes mentioned after Mantravicāra, or discussion with the same object.

⁴ Rāśi.

⁵ Nakṣatra.

⁶ Graha—that is, Rāhu and Ketu, or the points at which the path of the moon intersects the ecliptic.

⁷ Yoga; conjunctions of stars with earth.

⁸ The universe is contained in the body with all its external details. With the objective conjunction, etc., there is a corresponding conjunction in the Sādhaka's body, or, more strictly, it is the same conjunction viewed in different aspects.

⁹ Before initiation it is usual to ascertain whether a Mantra is svakula or akula. The circle in which nativity is marked in Astrology is called Cakra, but here the reference is also to the Tāntrik Cakras, such as the A-ka-da-ma and others described in Tantrasāra (see *ante* of my edition of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra).

¹⁰ Accomplished, perfected, fruitful. (Siddha) accomplished—that is, without much difficulty.

¹¹ Literally, "which has to be accomplished". This term, as the others, is here technically used as descriptive of a particular Mantra; here a Mantra accomplished with great difficulty.

¹² Recitation of Mantra and sacrifice unto fire (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹³ Literally, "well accomplished".

¹⁴ Or Ari. Ari and Ripu are synonymous words meaning "enemy". A Mantra with which an enemy is destroyed.

to be friends, Sādhyamantras to be servers,¹ Susiddhamantras to be helpers,² and Śatrumantras³ to be destroyers. Friendly Mantras become Siddha⁴ through Japa,⁵ according to rules laid down in the Śāstra. Sādhyamantras become Siddha⁵ through much serving.⁶ Helper Mantras grant desires even without much service, and destructive Mantras more surely destroy the Sādhaka.”

This is the general rule, but in certain special circumstances, which must be learnt from Gurus only, there is no necessity for adjudging the suitability of Mantras.⁷ Here the point for special consideration of Sādhakas is that, although the object of worship⁸ of the Iṣṭadevata,⁹ Pāṭa,¹⁰ Stava,¹¹ Homa,¹² Dhyāna,¹³ Dhāraṇā,¹⁴ Samādhi,¹⁵ or other means, and of Siddhi and Sādhana with one's own Dikṣāmantra,¹⁶ is the same; yet the actual working varies. The fruit which a Sādhaka achieves in ten years by means of Pūja, Pāṭa, Stava, and so forth, can be obtained in but one year, month, week, or even one day, by force of a powerful Mantrasādhana; for in the case of Pūja, Stava, Dhyāna, Dhāraṇā¹⁷ and so forth, only the Sādhaka's Sādhanaśakti¹⁸ operates; whilst in the case of Sādhana with Mantra, Sādhanaśakti works in conjunction with Mantraśakti.¹⁹ For reasons of place, time, and person a Sādhaka's Sādhanaśakti¹⁸ may be, and actually often is, imperfect, and meets with obstacles. But the invincible power of Mantraśakti¹⁹ can never be defeated. Mantra

¹ Sevaka; during accomplishment.

² Poṣaka.

³ Meaning the same as Ari or Ripu.

⁴ Accomplished, perfected, fruitful. (Siddha) accomplished—that is, without much difficulty.

⁵ Recitation of Mantra and sacrifice unto fire (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ That is, much Sādhana.

⁷ As where the Mantra is received in dream.

⁸ Ceremonial worship. For this and the following terms see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁹ The particular Devatā whom a particular Sādhaka worships, such as Kṛṣṇa in the case of a Vaiṣṇava, and in whose Mantra the Sādhaka is specially initiated.

¹⁰ Reading of Śāstra.

¹¹ Hymn of praise.

¹² Sacrifice into fire, which is of several kinds.

¹³ Meditation.

¹⁴ Concentration.

¹⁵ Yoga ecstasy, or realization of the Brahman.

¹⁶ The particular Mantra in which the Sādhaka has been initiated.

¹⁷ See *ante*.

¹⁸ That is, the force generated by the Sādhana of the Sādhaka himself. Its nature and intensity therefore varies.

¹⁹ Sādhaka's Mantra itself—i.e., a constant quantity when once

is equally and in all places powerful, whether in the Upper,¹ Middle,² and Nether³ worlds, or in water, on land, or in space. Mantraśakti is unconcerned with the question whether the Sādhakas' purpose is good or bad. Fire will equally burn down a house in the case of a malicious arson as it will in Homa⁴ accept the offerings made in the sacrificial pit in the name of Devatās. Whenever Mantraśakti is invoked, whether it be with the object of doing good or harm to one's own self or another person, it will of a surety accomplish that work. It is the Sādhaka who reaps the consequence, whether it be Heaven⁵ or Hell.⁶ As fire only dies out after it has consumed that to which it has been set, so Mantraśakti ceases to operate only when it has fully revealed its power. A Sādhaka's individual (ātmā) Śakti is like wind, and Mantraśakti is like fire, so that where the Sādhaka's individual Śakti is weak, the Divine Śakti of Mantra can in a moment make it very, very great. Just as waves of air, when struck and re-struck by flames of fire, flow strong and fast in the sky, and these flames of fire, fanned by the rapid currents of air, blaze with redoubled force, so the Sādhaka's individual Śakti, when struck again and again by Mantraśakti, is very rapidly developed, and then a strong, active individual Śakti unites with Mantraśakti to make the latter doubly powerful. Just as with the help of a breath of wind a small fire is generated, which then, by the movements of the air which is drawn into it, become so great that it illuminates the world and firmament with its lustre, so with the help of a mere particle of individual Śakti, Mantraśakti in a very small form appears, which then, with the development of the previously almost inert individual Śakti, becomes so great that it illumines the heart of the Jīva and penetrates even through Brahmaloḥa.⁷ It is simply because Mantra possesses this wonderful power that a Jīva may accomplish that which appears to be impossible; otherwise, how could anyone expect a Jīva to achieve by his own effort the treasure which is worshipped by Śiva? What individual Śakti does Jīva possess by virtue of which he can, without the help of Mantra, conquer the Jīvaśakti⁸ and transform it into

¹ Svarga, the heavens.

² Mārtya, the world of mortals of this earth.

³ Rasātala, one of the nether worlds, for which it here stands as a general term.

⁴ Sacrifice into fire. A pit is prepared, and on the hearth (Kuṇḍa) the fire is laid into which the offerings are thrown, that Agni (Fire) may carry them to the Devas.

⁵ Svarga.

⁶ Naraka. When called into active operation, Mantraśakti displays its power, whatever be the result. If, however, the Sādhaka invokes that power for an evil purpose, that is the Sādhaka's affair, and he will likely go to Hell.

⁷ The highest of the fourteen worlds or regions.

the Daivīśakti?¹ In the vast field of the Samsāra, and in that darkness which is delay in the attainment of Siddhi, Mantra alone is the everlasting autumnal full moon which never sets and never rises.² The cool, pure, and bright rays of this moon are the infinite mercy of the Mother of the world. Pious Sādhakas and Sādhikās³ are the Cakoras⁴ and Cakorīs,⁵ who are ever thirsty to drink these rays. Spreading their two wings of knowledge⁶ and action,⁷ they soar above the region of Samsāra to the greatest heights of the far-extending firmament of Sādhana, and there, dancing with joy, are blessed with the draught of nectar. Sadānanda⁸ has therefore said to Ānandamayī:⁹ “None but the Cakoras know the beauty of moonshine.” (Similarly, none but Sādhakas and Sādhikās know the nectar of Mantraśakti. The sight of it ever makes the community of one-eyed, faithless crows to squat in their dry nests, shutting their eyes in fear, and hiding their heads.)

More than the above cannot be made public on the subject of Mantraśakti, the creeper which grants the fourfold fruit¹⁰ to the Sādhaka. We, therefore, here stop after having merely pointed out the main principles alone.¹¹ The entire tree will become revealed when its branches, twigs, leaves, and fruits are distinctly shown.¹² The Tantra Śāstra is not a pleasure-ground for the ease-loving and luxurious. It is the hermitage, in the woods¹³ built by Yoga, of Him who is the crest-gem of great Yogīs,¹⁴ and the Guru of all mobile and immobile things. Who has the power to touch, without His command, a single leaf or flower belonging to this lovely forest, full of energy?¹⁵ Whoever, with the mad thought of reliance on the powers of his own arms, enters into this forest without His command will of a certainty be burnt into ashes by the most terrible fire¹⁵ of the Lord of Destruction, like flies which fall into a flame or Kandarpa¹⁶ when seized by the

¹ The Śakti of a Deva as such. With this Śakti he can accomplish that which a Deva can.

² As it is always above the horizon, it cannot be said to rise or set.

³ Female Sādhakas.

⁴ Birds celebrated in Sanskrit poetry as being very fond of moon-light.

⁵ Female Cakoras.

⁶ Jñāna.

⁷ Karma.

⁸ He who is ever-joyful—Śiva.

⁹ She who is bliss; the Devī, His spouse.

¹⁰ Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹¹ Mūla-tattva.

¹² Which the Guru will do.

¹³ Tapovana.

¹⁴ Śiva.

¹⁵ Tejas.

jaws of death. This is why, after having come so far, we now recede in fear.

As to what yet remains to be explained, we bow to those Lotus-feet so sought by devotees, and fervently pray that He may, according to what He Himself has said, appear in the hearts of all Gurus, and through them teach their disciples that aspect of His which is Mantra.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE GURU ¹

ALL that has been above mentioned in relation to Mantra Tattva depends on Gurutattva, for the root of initiation,² is in Guru; the root of Mantra is in initiation;¹ the root of Devatā is in Mantra; and the root of Siddhi is in Devatā. Bhagavān has, therefore, said in the Muṇḍamālā Tantra: "Mantra is born of Guru, and Devatā is born of Mantra, so that, O Beauteous One, Guru stands in the place of a grandfather to the Iṣṭadevatā. Just as service done to the father or grandfather pleases the son or grandson, service done to Guru pleases Mantra; service done to Mantra pleases Devatā; and service done to both Guru and Mantra also pleases Devatā."

Any deviation from this line of action produces contrary results; that is to say, just as service done to the son and grandson disregarding the father and grandfather really displeases instead of pleasing the former, so the worship of Mantra at a disregard of Guru or worship of Devatā, at a disregard of Mantra or worship of Iṣṭadevatā, at a disregard of Guru and Mantra, rather angers than pleases them. Here it should also be understood that, just as there is no possibility of pleasing the son and grandson by serving them at a disregard of the father and grandfather, so also there is no possibility of pleasing the father and grandfather by serving them without care for the son and grandson. There is no likelihood of pleasing the Guru even by serving him and Mantra at a disregard of Devatā, or him alone at a disregard of Devatā and Mantra. The necessity for these observations exists in the fact that nowadays one finds many disciples³ who only seek the protection of Guru for fear of having to make Japā⁴ of Mantra, and to worship Devatā. Such respect for Guru is in itself a sign of dishonest motive. In fact, Siddhi is near at hand for him only who makes no distinction between Guru, Mantra, and Devatā.⁵ Śāstra has therefore said: "What does not

¹ Gurutattva.

² Dikṣā.

³ Śiṣya

⁴ Vide, Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.

the Divine Śakti which is Mantra is communicated to the disciple's body from that of the Guru. Just as the power¹ of burning and giving light in the case of either lamp or of the fire which is the result of their combination remains the same both before and after the ignition (the fire in both lamps being the same), so the real Guru is everywhere the same, whether in the body of the (earthly) Guru or in that of his disciple.

It is only so long as Śakti is not fully communicated to the disciple's body from that of the Guru that there subsists the relation² of Guru and disciple. One is a disciple³ only so long as one is a Sādhaka. On the attainment of Siddhi, this dualism is surpassed. Then there is none other than She, the One only, so that the relation of Guru and disciple⁴ no longer subsists. Siddhi and liberation are existence as attributeless Brahman. But just as it is impossible to attain liberation beyond the reach of attributes without worship of the Devatā with attributes, so it is impossible to attain monistic knowledge without worship of the Guru. Hence Śāstra has said: "Obeisance to the Guru, by whom is shown the Brahman,⁴ who pervades the entire universe of mobile and immobile things. Obeisance to the Guru, by whom the eyes of Jīva, blinded by the darkness of ignorance, are opened with the collyrium stick⁵ of knowledge." He by whose grace the Brahman who pervades the Universe is revealed and the eye of knowledge is opened is not a mere man, in spite of his appearance as such.

When, after attainment of the previous human birth at the close of a journey through eighty-four lakhs of births, the gate of a Jīva's good fortune is opened, then Bhagavān, Maheśwara Himself, appears before his eyes as Guru. At that time the wheel of Destiny has revolved to a point at which it places the Jīva in a position where he can see all-merciful Sadāśiva standing before him as Jīva's Guru. Hence it often happens that the Guru, who has baffled search for even a hundred years, gratifies of his own accord, unsought and in one moment, the fortunate disciple without any effort on the latter's part. By good fortune, a current of air then blows similar to that which, after a period of terrible drought, stirs fresh clouds heavy with rain, which will soothe with its ample showers the bosom of the parched yet sprouting fields. The crop of Sādhana which adorns the great heart of the Sādhaka intoxicates the world with the fragrance of full-blown flowers and the beauty of full-grown fruits. As a rule that fortunate day does not arrive unless it has been preceded by the germs of intense Sādhana performed in previous births. We therefore often find that, even if a great saint,⁶ the very incarnation of Śiva, appears before an unfortunate Jīva, the latter does not bow to his lotus-feet. At that time

the Jīva's heart is so completely subdued by ignorance through the deluding Māyā of the Mother of the World that his eyes open to discover only faults and no virtues in such a man. On the other hand, if a Jīva has acquired a store of religious merits in previous births, attachment and single-minded devotion to the feet of the Guru are natural qualities of his. For this reason Bhagavān Maheśvara Himself has said in the Kulārṇava Tantra:

“O beloved, how can that subtle aspect of Śiva which is one, omnipresent, attributeless,¹ indifferent, undecaying, unattached like space, unbeginning and unending, be an object of worship to the dualistic mind?” “Hence it is that the Supreme Guru has entered into the body of the human Guru. O Devī, if a Sādhaka duly worships Him with devotion he grants that Sādhaka both enjoyment and liberation (2). O Devī, although this My form as Śiva is My gross aspect, it is yet being full of light and energy² imperceptible to human eyes. For this reason I have assumed the form of Guru in the world of man, and thus protect the race of Śiṣyas³ (3). Paramaśiva Himself in human body secretly wanders on the earth in order to favour Śiṣyas (4). For the protection of Sādhus,⁴ Sadāśiva assumes a modest (merciful)⁵ form, and though being Himself above the Samsāra, yet appears and acts in this world as though he were a man of the Samsāra (5). O beloved, the Śrīguru⁶ is Śiva, though He has not three eyes⁷; Viṣṇu too, though He has not four arms; and Brahmā also, though He has not four heads⁸ (6). O Bhavānī,⁹ when the fruits of sin predominate, Guru appears as man, and when the fruits of virtuous acts prevail, Guru appears as Śiva (7). Like blind men deprived for ever of sight of the sun, unfortunate Jīvas are unable to see the real aspect of Guru, the embodiment of the Brahman, though he is present before their eyes (8). It is undoubtedly true that Guru is Deva Sadāśiva Himself, for who is it who grants

¹ Niṣkala. The Brahman is called Sakala when with Prakṛti, as it is Niṣkala when thought of as without Prakṛti, for Kalā is Prakṛti (Śāradātilaka, chap. i). (See Introduction to A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess".)

² Tejas.

³ Disciples.

⁴ The pious.

⁵ The brackets are the author's. The original word is Nirahamkāra—without Ahaṁkāra or egotism, which is here rendered by the author as modest.

⁶ The revered Guru. Śrī, or Auspicious, is a term of respect.

⁷ As has Śiva.

⁸ Viṣṇu has generally four arms, though in his Kṛṣṇa Avatāra he has two. Brahmā has four heads.

⁹ Feminine of Bhava, a name of Śiva in the watery form of the Aṣṭamūrti. The Vāyu Purāṇa says that He is called Bhava because all things come from Him, and subjoin in water. The Devī is Bhavānī as the Spouse and Giver of

liberation to Sādhakas if Guru be not Śiva Himself? O Pārvatī,¹ there is not the least difference between Deva Sadāśiva and Śrīguru. Whoever makes a distinction between them commits sin (10). For, O Devī, by assumption of the form of a preceptor, Guru Deva² severs the multitude of bonds which bind a Jīva to the state of a Paśu,³ and enables him to attain to the Parabrahman (11). Assuming the form of a preceptor⁴ all-merciful, Īśvara liberates by means of initiation⁵ Paśus bound by the bonds of Māyā (12). Just as the words Ghaṭa, Kalaśa, and Kumbha⁶ designate the same thing, so the words Devatā, Mantra, and Guru designate the same subject⁷ (13). Devatā in its ground⁸ is the same as Mantra,⁹ and Mantra in its ground is the same as Guru.¹⁰ Thus the effect of worshipping Devatā, Mantra, and Guru is the same (14). In My person as Śiva I accept worship, and by appearing as Guru I sever the bonds of the Jīva's existence (15)."

In the Guru Tantra it is said: "If through good fortune acquired by merit in previous births a Sādhaka does Dhyāna and Stotra of Guru,¹¹ Japa of Gurumantra¹², worship of, satisfaction, and devotion to the feet of Guru,¹³ then, O Devī, their Mantras become Siddha,¹⁴ and they are liberated from existence. The merit which a Śiṣya¹⁵ acquires during his stay in the Guru's house is imperishable, and if the Guru's house happens to be in a sacred place of pilgrimage,¹⁶ that merit is increased a hundred-fold."

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: "By devotion to Guru a Jīva will attain the state of Indra,¹⁷ but by devotion to Me he will become swine. (That is to say, if a Jīva, whilst giving devotion to his Iṣṭadevatā, yet slight his Guru, he becomes swine.) In fact, no Śāstra speaks of anything which is superior to devotion to the Guru."

¹ The name of the Devī, as daughter of the Mountain King, Himālaya.

² The Guru, who is truly a Deva, being the earthly incarnation of Śiva Himself.

³ The unenlightened tāmasik state (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Ācārya.

⁵ Dikṣa.

⁶ Synonymous words meaning "pitcher" or "jar".

⁷ Padārtha.

⁸ That is, the Svarūpa of Devatā (see *ante*).

⁹ That is, the Svarūpa of Mantra.

¹⁰ That is, the Svarūpa of Guru.

¹¹ That is, meditation on and hymns of praise of the Guru. Service is always given to the Guru by the Śiṣya.

¹² That is, "recitation" (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*) of the Mantra, of which Guru is the Devatā or "Aing".

¹³ As Deva the Guru is object of worship.

¹⁴ Perfected and fruitful.

¹⁵ Disciple.

Again: "O Maheśvarī, fie to his wrath, fie to his strength, fie to his race, fie to his works in whom devotion to Guru is not engendered!"

The Yoginī Tantra says: "The place where Guru resides is Kailāsa.¹ The house in which Guru lives is Cintāmaṇi house.² The trees in the Guru's house are Kalpa trees.³ The creepers are Kalpa creepers.⁴ The water even in ditches is Gaṅgā.⁵ In short, O Devī, everything in that sacred place is sacred. The female servants in the Guru's house are Bhairavīs, and the male servants are Bhairavas.⁶ In this manner it is that an earnest Sādhaka should think of his Guru. O Maheśvarī, He who has gone round his Guru but once has circled the whole earth with its seven islands."

In the Viśvasāra Tantra it is said: "The place where Guru resides is Kāśī.⁷ The water of his feet is Jāhnavī⁸ Herself. Gurudevā is Viśveśvara⁹ incarnate, and the great Mantra uttered by his fair mouth is the Saviour¹⁰ Brahman Himself."

"The appearance¹¹ of Guru is the root of Dhyāna, the lotus-foot of Guru is the root of Pūja, the word of Guru is the root of Mantra, and the grace of Guru is the root of Siddhi."

"If a Sādhaka be cursed by Munis, Pannagas, or Suras,¹² or if he be threatened with the calamity of death, then, O Pārvatī, Guru can save him even at the time of such terrible peril and none other."

In the Guptasādhana Tantra it is said: "Guru is Brahmā. Guru is Viṣṇu. Guru is Deva Maheśvara Himself. Guru is the place of pilgrimage.¹³ Guru is the sacrifice.¹⁴ Guru is charity (that is, the religious merit acquired by means of charity). Guru is devotion and austerities.¹⁵ Guru is fire. Guru is Sūrya.¹⁶ The entire Universe is Guru."¹⁷

¹ The sacred mount and abode of Śiva (see Introduction to my "Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra").

² The Cintāmaṇi Gṛha is that which yields all objects desired. Of that the chamber or house is built. The Devī there resides. In the commentary on the Gauḍapāda Sūtra the Cintāmaṇi house is said to be the place of origin of all those Mantras which bestow all desired objects (Cintita). See "Mahā-nirvāṇa Tantra".

³ Desire-gratifying celestial trees.

⁴ Creepers of the same character.

⁵ Water of Ganges.

⁶ The terms Bhairava and Bhairavī mean Śiva and Śakti in these forms of that name. They also mean Tāntriks who have been initiated in the Virācāra ritual.

⁷ The sacred city of Benares.

⁸ The Ganges as daughter of Jahnu.

⁹ Lord of the Universe.

¹⁰ Tāraka.

¹¹ Mūrti.

¹² Sages, Serpent Divinities and Devas.

¹³ Tīrtha.

¹⁴ Yajña.

¹⁵ Tapasvā.

“What further religious merit can be acquired by charity or devotion,¹ or by visiting places of pilgrimage,² by him who has worshipped the beautiful feet of his Guru? For such an one has worshipped the three worlds. All places of pilgrimage which exist in the whole Universe reside in the sole of the Guru's Lotus-foot.”

“Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, and Parameśvarī Pārvatī, Indra, and other Devas, Yakṣas, and other beings born of Devas,³ Pitr̥s,⁴ Gaṅgā, and other sacred rivers, all Gandharvas,⁵ reptiles, mountains and other moving and unmoving things in the Universe, are eternally seated in the Guru's body. That very instant the Guru is satisfied, they, too, are satisfied.”

“Even Śāstra is not greater than Guru, nor is Tapasyā,⁶ Mantra, or the fruit of religious rites greater than Guru, nor is the Devī Herself greater than Guru, nor is even Śiva greater than Guru. No form and appearance⁷ is superior to that of Guru, and there is even no Japa which is superior to Guru—that is to say, by performance of Sādhana of Guru alone one becomes Siddha⁹ in all the other modes of Sādhana. Hence it has been said in the Yāmala:

“Śiva alone is Guru, and I am that Śiva. O great Devī, Thou, too, art Guru, and Mantra alone is Guru. For this reason as regards Mantra there is no difference between Gurudeva and Iṣṭadevatā.¹⁰ That Gurudeva must sometimes be contemplated in the thousand-petalled lotus (in the head), sometimes in the lotus of the heart (as Iṣṭadevatā),¹¹ and sometimes in His visible worldly form.”

In the Pichchhilā Tantra it is said: “Gurus are of two kinds according as they teach and initiate.¹² The first is the initiating Guru,¹³ and then follows the teaching Guru.¹⁴ The initiating Guru is he from whom initiation in Mantra is taken, and the teaching Guru is he from whom Samādhi, Dhyāna, Dhāraṇa, Japa, Stava, Kavaca, Puraścaraṇa, Mahā-puraścaraṇa,¹⁵ and other various forms of Sādhana and Yoga are learnt

¹ Tapasya.

² Tirtha.

³ Devayoni.

⁴ The forefathers (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ Musical Devayonis: sons of Brahmā.

⁶ Devotion, austerities, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁷ Mūrti.

⁸ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, ante.

⁹ Successful, accomplished, perfect; for Śakti is thereby fully developed.

¹⁰ That is, the Guru as Deva and the patron Deva of the worshipper. The Mantra is both.

¹¹ This is not the Anāhata lotus, but another close by it, where the chosen Deity is always worshipped.

¹² Śikṣāguru and Dikṣāguru.

¹³ Dikṣāguru.

¹⁴ Śikṣāguru.

¹⁵ That is, Yoga, ecstasy, concentration, “recitation” of Mantra, hymn, amulet, and the two rites known as Puraścaraṇa and the greater Puraścaraṇa.

after initiation. Of these two he is the supreme Guru, from whom the great Mantra of Iṣṭadevatā has been heard and learnt, and by him alone Siddhi can be attained."

In the Kulāgama, Gurus have been described and divided into the following six classes:

"Instigator¹ (or he who instigates initiation by explaining its utility and that of Sādhana); Inaugurator² (he who inaugurates Sādhana and its aims)³; Explainer⁴ (or he who explains Sādhana and its object); Director⁵ (or the person who definitely and clearly shows what Sādhana is and its object); Teacher⁶ (or he who teaches Sādhana and its object⁷); and Illuminator⁸ (or the person who imparts knowledge of, and concerning, Sādhana and its object by tearing asunder the ties of the heart). Know Gurus to be of these six kinds, of which the first five kinds are, as it were, the effects of the last as the cause" (that is to say, without the spiritual knowledge which the Illuminator imparts, instigation, inauguration, explanation, direction, and teaching, are not only ineffectual, but even productive of great harm both in this world and hereafter).

For this reason Bhagavān, the creator of all things, has said in the Pichchhilā Tantra: "This Sādhanaśāstra is based solely on Guru. In it there is no beneficent lord other than Guru (that is to say, there may be hosts of lords who are not beneficent). O Maheśvarī! a Sādhaka should seek the protection of Guru."

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: "O Parameśvarī! the fool who commences Japa and Tapas⁹ by reading books instead of receiving instructions from Guru acquires nothing but sin. Neither mother nor father nor brother can save him. O fair Lady! Guru alone can in a single moment destroy the mass of his sins, for in the Tantra Śāstra none but Guru has any competence.¹⁰ One should therefore take as one's Guru a very good man."

In the Guru Tantra it is said: "If Guru be pleased, Śiva Himself is pleased; if Guru is displeased, the three-eyed Deva¹¹ is displeased; if Guru be pleased, the all-good Devī is pleased; and if Guru be displeased, Tripurasundarī¹² becomes displeased. Hence, O Maheśvarī! for the

¹ Preraka.

² Sūcaka.

³ He who after the first has sown the seed of desire, for it brings the Sādhaka to the point of commencing Sādhana.

⁴ Vācaka.

⁵ Darśaka.

⁶ Śikṣaka.

⁷ That is, he who goes into details and teaches the ritual.

⁸ Bodhaka, who gives intellectual grasp of the various aspects of the subject and spiritual knowledge.

⁹ "Recitation" of Mantra, devotion, austerity, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹⁰ Adhikāra.

crossing of the sea of Samsāra, Guru is the only master, protector, and destroyer, and he also is the grantor of liberation."

The Sādhaka should now realize whether the state of a Guru described in the above-mentioned quotations from the Śāstra is something human or Divine, something appertaining to a Jīva or to the Brahman. If we are to suppose that the Gurudeva becomes man because the Gurusakti¹ which is Brahman appears in a human body, we must also conclude that Devatā becomes clay or stone because She appears in a clay or stone image.² In fact, that which constitutes the state of a Guru is undivided perfect Brahman.⁴ Though appearing in clay or in stone the Brahman is all-pervading, and cannot be limited to any point. It is impossible that that which does not become limited in inert clay or stone will become so in conscious man. As a matter of fact, a Sādhaka can by the force of his own Sādhana awaken the Śakti of consciousness in unconscious images made of clay or stone. On the other hand, to him who is even not entitled to be called a Sādhaka, but is merely a seeker of competency⁵ for Sādhana, that clay image is never conscious. For this reason, then, it is necessary, in order to gain Śakti,⁶ to distinguish between conscious and unconscious. Amongst all conscious things such an one is required as can by the overpowering force of its consciousness make even other unconscious things conscious. That is why, on the subject of taking Gurus,⁷ the Śāstra prescribes that discrimination be made between persons competent and incompetent to become Gurus, otherwise, had the Śakti which constitutes man been identical with the Śakti which constitutes the state of a Guru, any man would be acceptable as Guru, and there would have been no necessity for such a critical examination of inner and outer Śaktis.⁸

In the Kulāgama it is said: "Those who are instructed by sages possessed of spiritual knowledge become undoubtedly possessed of spiritual knowledge themselves. Those who are instructed by Paśus⁹ should, O Devil! be themselves known as Paśus. For though a learned

¹ The power resident in the Guru as such—not the ordinary human Śakti.

² The Gurutva or Guruhood. ³ One of the Daśamahāvidyā.

⁴ Literally, Brahmatva or Brahmanhood. ⁵ Adhikāra.

⁶ The Śakti of consciousness spoken of above. That is, those who have not realized consciousness in all things must, in order to arrive at this state, make the distinction and take a Guru.

⁷ Gurukaraṇa.

⁸ The inner Śakti is that which manifests as true spirituality. The outer Śakti is such knowledge and faculties as learning in Śāstra, details of Sādhana, ritual, etc.

⁹ Sādhakas of the Tāmasik class in the three Bhāras (see Introduction).

man can save an ignorant man, the latter can never save another ignorant man. A boat can carry a stone across a river, but a stone can never carry another stone across it. One person can never guide another person along a path which he has never trod himself; but he who has travelled along any one path, reached its end, and thus known the goal of all paths, can, standing at the centre to which all paths trend, call to the travellers on each of the paths, and thus help them to reach the place where he himself stands."

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said: "For Śakti-mantra a Śākta Guru is best, for Śivamantra a Śaiva Guru is best, for Viṣṇumantra a Vaiṣṇava Guru is best, for Sūrya mantra Saura Guru is best, for Gaṇapati-mantra a Gāṇapatya Guru is best, and a Kaula Guru is best for all these Mantras.¹ A wise man should, therefore, heartfully desire to take initiation from a Kaula." For "whoever has been initiated in a Mantra by a Paśu Guru² is undoubtedly a Paśu. Whoever has taken Mantra from a Viraguru³ becomes a Vira. Whoever has taken Mantra from a Kaula Guru (one following Kulāchāra)⁴ knows Brahman."

In the Brhannīla Tantra it is said: "A Śaiva may teach other Mantras (than the Śivamantra). A Vaiṣṇava may teach those (Vaiṣṇavas) belonging to his own community. A Saura may teach Sauras. A Gāṇapatya may give initiation in worship of Gaṇapati. A Kaula, however, is competent to give initiation in Śaiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava, and all other worships. One should, therefore, by all means seek the protection of a Kaula Guru."

In the Śāradātilaka it is said: "A Guru, according to the Tantra Śāstra, is one who is possessed of the following qualities: A body which is pure both on the mother's and father's side; purity of thought; mastery over the senses; knowledge of the substance of all Tantras; knowledge of the purpose of all Śāstras; a doer of good to others; devoted to Japa, Pūjā,⁵ and so forth; truthfulness of speech acquired by Tapas;⁶ calmness;

¹ To each member of the communities worshipping Devī (Śākta), Śiva (Śaiva), Viṣṇu (Vaiṣṇava), the Sun (Saura), or Gaṇeśa (Gāṇapatya), the Mantra of the Devatā worshipped is given. Thus the Śākta receives the Śaktimantra at initiation. The passage says that the Mantra should ordinarily be given by a Guru of the same community as the worshipper, though a Tāntrik Guru of the Kaulācāra may give, and is the best to give them all.

² One practising the Paśvācāra—that is, the way of the Paśu (see *ante*).

³ One practising the Virācāra, the Acāra of the Virabhāva; as to which, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁴ The last and highest of the Tāntrik Ācāras (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ "Recitation" of Mantra and ceremonial worship.

proficiency in the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas;¹ eagerness to know the truth of the Yoga path, and who feels the presence of Devatā in the heart, and so forth.

In the Viśvasāra Tantra it is said: "Such a Guru is prescribed by Śāstra as is eager to impart knowledge of all Śāstras, efficient, learned in the meaning of all Śāstras, sweet of speech, of good appearance, having all his limbs, Kulīna (one practising the Kulācāra). Of auspicious appearance, self-controlled, truthful, Brāhmaṇa,² of a peaceful mind, devoted to the welfare of his parents, and to all other duties belonging to an Āśrama,² and living in same country as the disciple."³

From the special mention of the adjective "Brāhmaṇa" it must be understood that none but a Brāhmaṇa can be a Guru for the initiation of all castes.

In the Bhuvaneśvarī Tantra it is said: "O great twice-born! A Brāhmaṇa possessed of the knowledge of all times⁴ can favour all castes by giving them initiation in Mantras. In his absence a peaceful and pious Kṣatriya can so favour Vaiśyas and Śūdras. In the absence of even a Kṣatriya Guru, a Vaiśya possessed of the above good qualities may favour Śūdras." A Śūdra cannot be a Guru even for the initiation of his own castemen, much less can he initiate men belonging to other castes. Thus the Śāktānanda Taraṅgiṇī says: "If a Śūdra hears Vidyā—i.e., receives a great Mantra from the mouth of another Śūdra—he is doomed to hell⁶ in the next world, and suffers from constant misery in this."

In the Vāsudeva-rahaśya it is said: "If a Śūdra hears Vidyā or Mantra from the mouth of another Śūdra, he starts for the Raurava Hell with ten million generations of his family. Both the giver and receiver of Mantra in such a case meet with the same consequence. For every word given and received both become guilty of the sin of Brahminicide."⁷

In the Jñānānandatarāṅgiṇī it is said: "A Śūdra should never give Mantra to another Śūdra. If he does so, both the giver and the receiver

¹ The Vedāṅgas or "limbs" of the Vedas are Śikṣā (science of proper articulation), Kalpa (ritual), Vyākaraṇa (linguistic analysis or grammar), Nirukta (explanation of difficult Vedic words), Jyotiṣa (astronomy), Chandas (metre).

² This is explained *post*.

³ For the reason of this, see *post*.

⁴ Past, present, and future.

⁵ Vidyā is a Mantra, but may here mean such matters as are the subject of spiritual knowledge, though the text would indicate the former meaning.

⁶ Naraka.

of Mantra will dwell in Hell with thirty million generations of their own families."

In the Kāmadhenu Tantra it is said: "The country in which a sinful Śūdra selling¹ Mantra lives becomes fallen, and its ruler also is contaminated with sin. O Lady of restless glances! how can the tongue of that great sinner pronounce Mantra? O fair Lady! his tongue is full of excrement, urine, and blood. His face is like excrement and urine, his food is made of excrement, his water is urine itself, and he is a Chaṇḍāla² by caste. The sight of his face makes Gangā³ to fly from Her own waters, and millions of sites of pilgrimages⁴ to fly from their respective seats. Gangā, the purifier of the three worlds, undoubtedly purifies even such great sinners as have committed such sins as Brahminicide and so forth, but at the sight of a Mantra-selling Śūdra She at once leaves the place and repairs to Brahmaloḥa."⁵

The adjective, "belonging to an Āśrama,"⁶ specified above in the enumeration of the necessary characteristics of a Guru should be understood to mean "belonging to the domestic Āśrama." In the definition of a Guru given by the Kulārṇava Tantra it is stated: "A Guru should know the meaning of all Śāstras and be a householder." The purpose of the requirement that the Guru should be "living in the same country" (as the disciple) is that if the Guru lives in another country it is difficult for the disciple to take instructions from and to serve him constantly.

¹ That is, making a trade of giving Mantra; which is not, however, unfortunately confined to Śūdras.

² One of the lowest castes.

³ The River Ganges as Deity.

⁴ Tīrthas.

⁵ The highest of the regions.

CHAPTER XIV

DISCUSSION UPON, AND SELECTION OF THE GURU ¹

IN the Yoginī Tantra it is said:

“Mantra should not be taken from the father, maternal grandfather, brother, one who is younger in age, or from one who is of the party of one’s enemy.”

In the Gaṇeśavimarśinī it is said: “Initiation by a Yati,² the father, one living in a forest, or when taken from a Sannyāsī does no good to a Sādhaka.”

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: “A husband should not initiate his wife, nor a father his son or daughter, and a brother should not initiate his brother. But if a husband is Siddha Mantra,³ he can initiate his wife as his Śakti, and in that case the Guru will not acquire fatherhood by reason of his having given Mantra, nor will the disciple become his daughter by reason of having received it from him.⁴ (The provision that a husband may initiate his wife as his Śakti must be understood to apply to Virācāra and Kulācāra⁵ only. Such an initiation is not ordained for Paśvācāra⁶ and the like, for in such Ācāras there is no worship with Śakti.) The letters⁷ in a Mantra are the Devatā, and the Devatā is Guru himself; so that Sādhakas and Sādhikās⁸ who desire their own good should make no distinction between Mantra, Devatā, and Guru.”

In the Siddhi Yāmala it is said: “O beloved one! if by good fortune a Sādhaka attains Siddhi in a Mantra, he may dispense with the ordinary conditions for becoming a Guru, and initiate his own Śakti (wife).”

¹ Guruvicāra—that is, selection with judgment after discussion.

² Literally, “One who has completely subdued the senses”: an ascetic so called.

³ This term has here a technical meaning, which is explained at see *post*.

⁴ Ordinarily, when the Guru gives Mantra, the Śiṣya becomes his son; but this is not so in the case stated.

⁵ The two divisions of Tāntrik Sādhakas of those names (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

In the Yāmala it is said: "A husband should not initiate his wife nor his father his daughter; but if a husband is Siddhamantra,¹ he may initiate his wife as his Śakti, and in that case the initiated does not become a daughter to him. If a father is Siddhamantra,¹ he may initiate his son, and a brother may be initiated by a brother who is Siddhamantra, and thus become a Siddhamantra himself. For, in the case of a Siddhamantra all disqualifications for giving and receiving initiation become qualifications.²"

The word Siddhamantra does not here mean "one who has attained Siddhi in a Mantra." It is a technical word, explained in the Kramasandrikā as follows: "Kālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā, Mātāṅgī, Kamalātmikā. These ten Mahāvidyas are called Siddhavidyās. Those who are initiated in their Mantra are called Siddhamantras."

In the Kālī Kalpa it is said: "O Mahādevī! if a Mantra is worshipped by three generations (great-grandfather, grandfather, and father) in succession, then that great Mantra becomes Siddhamantra."

In the Matsyasūkta, it is said: "A mantra given by a father is not faulty in Śaiva and Śākta rites, although it may not have force in other rites."

Moreover, in certain special matters a father has the right to initiate his eldest son if he is worthy, as, for instance, the Matsyasūkta says: "One may give (Mantra) to his eldest son, the crest gem of his family."

The Śrīkrama says: "Mantra may with prudence and care be given to an intelligent eldest son."

And so forth.

WOMEN GURUS

The Rudrayāmala says that a woman may be a Guru who possesses the following qualities: She must be Kulīna (practising Kulācāra,³ Kulajā born of a Kaula⁴ or respectable family), of auspicious appearance,⁵ fair face,⁶ and lotus-eyed; decked with gold and gems; endowed with intellect, calmness of mind, and all other good qualities; a follower of her Ācāra,⁷

¹ See below:

² That is, all disqualifications cease.

³ That is, the Ācāra of the Kaula division of Tāntrik Sādhakas.

⁴ A family which is and has been in past generations followers of Kulācāra.

⁵ She must be endowed with all good signs.

⁶ Literally, "whose face is like the moon".

⁷ Sadācāra. Ācāra is the way or practice which the particular person

good, pious, and chaste,¹ with control over the senses; of good conduct and devoted to the service of her elders; proficient in Mantras and in their meanings; ever engaged in Japa,² and devoted to the worship of her Iṣṭadevatā.³ By the worship of such a woman both Sādhana Śakti and spiritual knowledge is attained. A widow should not initiate. Initiation by a woman is to be recommended; in particular, initiation by a mother of her son, which gives results eight-fold greater than ordinary.

A widow, however, may initiate if she has sons. A Siddhamantra may, without any restriction, be taken from widows, and such initiation will have ordinary effect. If, however, it is taken from the mother, it will produce eight-fold effect. If a Sati⁷ who has both husband and son gives Siddhamantra without request and of her own initiative, then also such initiation will produce an effect eight times that of an ordinary initiation. If a mother gives her son the Mantra she herself worships and the son becomes devoted to it, he undoubtedly acquires the eight forms of Siddhi. O Devī! initiation in the mother's own Mantra is indeed precious; the Sādhaka who receives it from his mother in the first place obtains enjoyment⁸ in whatsoever form² he desires, and then undoubtedly becomes possessed of the knowledge of the meaning of thousand of crores¹⁰ of Mantras, and finally attains liberation. If a mother gives her own Mantra in a dream, and notwithstanding the Sādhaka is again initiated, he is doomed to be born as a Dānava.¹¹ If through special good fortune a mother initiates her son at his request, there is in that case no necessity for Mantravicāra,⁶ and the Sādhaka acquires Siddhi. In the case also of a Mantra received in a dream there is no need for Vicāra,⁶ either in respect of the Guru or the Mantra.

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: "In the case of a Mantra received in a dream there is no necessity for Vicāra¹² of Guru and Śiṣya. If a Mantra

¹ Sādhvī, female of Sādhu.

² "Recitation" of Mantra (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ The particular Devatā which she worships.

⁴ Power inherent in and derived from Sādhana.

⁵ Ordinarily; for, see *post*.

⁶ See *ante*.

⁷ A wife perfectly devoted to her husband.

⁸ Bhoga.

⁹ Literally, "body" (Śarīra)—he may by Sakāma Sādhana obtain such forms of enjoyment in this body, or in another body in another birth. By Yoga he can enter into other bodies in this birth. Thus, if he desires to become a Rāja, he may in this or the next birth become one.

¹⁰ A crore is ten millions.

¹¹ Démoniac enemies of the Devas.

is received in a dream from a woman, it will be purified by a Samskāra.”¹ “No Mantra becomes effective without the taking of Guru,² therefore the life of the Guru should be invoked into a Mantra received in a dream and into a Ghaṭa, and the Mantra should then be received by writing it on a banian³ leaf with Kuṅkuma.”⁴ This is laid down in the Yoginī Tantra and other books.

The Dhyāna,⁵ Mantra, Stava,⁶ Kavaca⁷ and so forth, for women Gurus are different from those for male Gurus. Sādhakas will learn them from the Maṭṛkābheda, Gupta-sādhana, and other Tantras.

We have above quoted but briefly a few short excerpts from all that has been said in Śāstra concerning Guruvicāra⁸ and the outer characteristics⁹ of Guru.

We have not even touched the inner characteristics of Guru, which have been specified in the Kulārṇava, Kāmākhyā, Rudrayāmala, and other Tantras. For an exposition of these deep and solemn spiritual sayings would require a separate volume; secondly, these statements are not for public ears; and thirdly, we doubt whether the Gurus of the present day will be able to put their teeth into them.¹⁰ Far less do we expect that Śiṣyas¹¹ will be able to judge and select Gurus with intelligence. We therefore refrain from undertaking what is both a useless and, at the same time, improper task.

GURU FAMILY AND FAMILY GURU¹²

In the Yoginī Tantra it is said: “A special honour appertains to the Guru family for ten generations¹³ by reason of giving Mantra in Paśvācāra; for twenty-five generations by reason of giving Mantra in Virācāra; for

¹ Mantrasamskāra—that is, purification of the Mantra, which is done afterwards.

² That is, acceptance of Guru by Śiṣya, and of Śiṣya by Guru.

³ Vaṭa. ⁴ A red powder made of a root called Saṭhi, coloured red.

⁵ The formula containing a description of the Devatā, who is the subject of meditation.

⁶ Hymn of praise.

⁷ Amulet. ⁸ Selection with judgment of a Guru.

⁹ That is, his knowledge of Sādhana, Śāstra, etc., as compared with spiritual intuition.

¹⁰ That is, understand them even a little.

¹¹ Disciples.

¹² Gurukula and Kulaguru—that is, the subject of the Guru's own family and of the Guru himself, who is family Guru to others.

¹³ That is, if in searching for a Guru one finds a member of a Guru family who comes within ten generations of an ancestor of his who had initiated an ancestor of the present intending Śiṣya, then the Śiṣya should accept him as his

fifty generations where the Mantra is one of any of the Mahāvidyās,¹ and and for one hundred generations by reason of teaching Brahmayoga.”

In the Pichchhilā Tantra it is said: “If a Śiṣya forsakes the family of his ancestral Guru under a sinful delusion, he dwells in terrible Hell² as long as the Sun, Moon and Stars endure.”

In the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa it is said: “For this reason, if a descendant of the Guru family, who is even younger in age,³ is a learned man, he should be accepted without discussion as Guru for initiation because he belongs to the Guru family.” Many Tantras have in this way ordained that the Śiṣya cannot forsake the Guru family. But in course of time this ordinance has become the cause of the ruin of the Ārya Society.

As a matter of fact, the cause of this ruin is not the ordinance itself, but it is the arrogance of the Guru family and the ignorance of Śiṣyas which has brought it about.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: “Death overtakes him who forsakes Mantra, poverty overtakes him who forsakes Guru, and the Sādhaka who forsakes both Mantra and Guru goes to the Raurava Hell.” Nowadays there are many who would make this verse an authority against forsaking the Guru family. But according to Tāntrik Ācāryas⁴ a Sādhaka will be considered sinful in the sense of this verse only if he forsakes his own Guru and Mantra; for one cannot abandon a thing which one has not accepted. The saying “One should not forsake the family of his ancestral Guru” means that while there is a person fit to be Guru in the Guru family, one should not forsake him and adopt another Guru. Otherwise, the Śiṣya is not prohibited from leaving the Guru family. What, then, do the words “should not forsake” mean? Even the verses quoted above from the Yoginī Tantra⁵ are interpreted by some people to mean that successive generations should be honoured as descendants of Gurus of the Śiṣya’s ancestor, even if they are not actually taken as Gurus.⁶

We do not object to this interpretation. It cannot, however, have been intended by the Śāstra that members of the ancestral family of Guru must be taken as Gurus, even if they are not fit to be such. This is clearly put in the Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, which says that, “If a descendant of the Guru family who is even younger in age is a learned man, he should be taken as Guru”⁶; that is to say, in such a case only the claim of the

¹ The ten great mūrtis of the Devī.

² Naraka.

³ That is, than some third person not belonging to the Guru family.

⁴ Learned men.

⁵ See *ante*.

⁶ That is, though such may not be taken as Gurus, respect must be shown

Guru family is indisputable. As to placing oneself in the hands of an incompetent person simply out of regard for the Guru family, we leave it to the intelligent reader to decide whether upon a consideration of the principles which govern the matter of the Guru such a proposition is reconcilable with Dharma and reason. A learned man, though younger in age, is older in knowledge. In the domain of knowledge the Sādhana-śāstra is concerned with seniority of knowledge only. Hence a learned man, even if he is younger in age, is considered older, and this seniority entitles him to be a Guru. Śiṣyas should also remember here that the learning which is here spoken of¹ is not the sort of learning for which degrees or titles² are given. On the contrary, the learning I speak of is that which utterly destroys all the bondage of Jīva.³ Nowadays, most of those who represent the ideal type of a learned man in worldly society are considered devoid of all sense, and perfectly ignorant in the society of Sādhakas. Hence, when one speaks of a learned man in the Guru family we must be understood to be speaking of one who possesses the learning which makes a man a Guru, and not the learning which consists in knowledge of the ordinances of the Smṛti, or the subtleties of the Nyāya philosophy. Notwithstanding that a man is considered to be learned according to the notions of society, the Śiṣya should ascertain whether he is learned in the science of Sādhana. To the misfortune of Indian Society accomplished Sādhakas and Mahāpuruṣas⁴ have disappeared from Guru families, and with them also the divine energy⁵ acquired by their Sādhana. The ruins of those Guru families now generally consist of a few Gurus, who exist like wicks which smell foul after the lamps have been extinguished. Society is on the verge of being destroyed by their oppressions and persecutions. They think that the profession of a Guru is a second Kulinism.⁶

Considering how their indulgence in acts repugnant to Dharma is daily increasing, and how much of the poisonous fruits of their Karma have become ripe, it seems that the day is not far off when these Gurus will be paid off.⁷ Although such paying off is inevitable, according to natural laws, yet we shall raise here one or two points dealt with in the Śāstra. For these Gurus have decided that they have got a charter over

¹ That is, the learning of the Guru, on which account he is selected to give initiation.

² Upādhi.

³ Literally, destroys all Upādhis of Jīvahood, meaning the philosophical Upādhis of name and form. There is here a play on the word Upādhi.

⁴ Great men.

⁵ Tejas.

⁶ As the Kulins think that by virtue of their birth they have a right to a superior position in society, so do Guru families.

honey-seeking bee flies from flower to flower, so a knowledge-seeking Śiṣya should seek the protection of Guru after Guru (5). Many are the Gurus who extract money out of Śiṣyas, but O Devī! rare are those truly good Gurus who allay the burning of the Śiṣyas' hearts (6). Obeisance to that Guru who has, with the collyrium-stick¹ of knowledge, opened the Jīva's eye blinded by the darkness of ignorance. Mindful of this (that is to say, knowing how great is the responsibility of Guru), a great Sādhaka will recognize the wise to be Gurus only, and then, O consort of Śiva, Siddhi will surely be attained by means of the Śiṣya's devotion only² (7). A good Guru is he who is calm and self-controlled, is a Kulīna, of pure mind worshipping with the five Tattvas³ (8). He is called a good Guru who has the reputation of being Siddha,⁴ maintains his Śiṣyas in any way which their necessities require, and works wonders by means of Divine Śakti (9). A good Guru is he who speaks of things previously unheard of and suited to the mind of the hearer truly and in a charming way, and who can equally explain both Tantra and Mantra (10). A good Guru is he who is always anxious to benefit the Śiṣya by giving him knowledge, and who is capable of punishing as well as rewarding (11). A good Guru is he whose aim is always the highest good⁵ who ever converses upon spiritual truths, and who has a single-minded devotion to the lotus-feet of his own Guru (12). O Devī! if a Śiṣya is able to obtain a Guru who is the possessor of such qualities, he should at once seek his protection, relinquishing⁶ an incapable Guru, and in such a case time⁷ need not be taken into account (13). Reprehensible is the Guru who only takes property from the Śiṣya; who is an oppressor of many (extracts money, etc., from many Śiṣyas (disciples) on the pretext of giving initiation)⁸ and is openly ridiculed by the people (14). If, notwithstanding that the Śiṣya is reverent in body, mind, and speech towards his Guru, the latter does not approve of a thing for a Śiṣya out of desire for that thing himself,

¹ Añjana, which is used to clear the vision.

² Query whether there is a mistake in the author's translation of the original Sanskrit, which runs, "Śiṣyabhaktyā kevalam niścitam" which may mean that Kevala or Kaivalya-liberation is sure to be attained by means of the Śiṣya's devotion. The author appears to have taken the word Kevala to mean "only".

³ Pañcatattva (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Accomplished.

⁵ Paramārtha.

⁶ Tyaktvā. This does not mean that he should forsake a man actually taken as Guru, but that in such a case he should relinquish selection from the Guru family.

⁷ Kālavicāra—that is, whether the time is suitable for Gurubhoga.

and wastes the Śiṣya's money in improper ways, then that most depraved man who wishes harm to his Śiṣya out of greed should be forsaken (15)."

Sādhakas will now ask themselves if the Guru family is to be considered above all discussion? All the authorities quoted above say that such and such a Guru should be relinquished. By the use here of the word Guru is meant not a person who has been accepted as Guru, but reference is made to that Guruhood¹ which is nothing but the family Guruhood occasioned by birth in the family of ancestral Guru. If such a Guru is fully qualified according to Śāstra, the Śiṣya should take him as Guru instead of seeking the protection of another Guru; otherwise he should be forsaken. This is the meaning of Śāstra. A Judge and Administrator² with the necessary qualifications, though he is not the King himself, is yet his representative, and by virtue of the King's power his commands are inviolable, and he himself is worshipped by all. This is the civil law³ of the State. By the authority of this law he is the ruler of the kingdom, and the kingdom desires to be ruled by him. It is because he performs the duties imposed on him by the King that his commands are accepted without question, and people pay with confidence revenue into his hands. But if through arrogance or selfishness he, trampling on all political principles, misappropriates that revenue and oppresses the innocent, then that kingdom is in danger of destruction through his oppressions. The community of Śiṣyas is in like peril through the oppressions committed by Gurus. In the administration of the State the Judge is concerned with political matters only, and if he interferes in any way with the principles of Dharma,⁴ the whole kingdom is in an uproar, and gives unending fuel⁵ to the flaming fire of rebellion. Similarly, Guru is only the Judge of principles of Dharma; but if he interferes in any way and in any matter concerning purely temporal matters, there is every likelihood that the fire of rebellion may break out among Śiṣyas. And this is what has actually happened. There is, however, this good news to tell—namely, that the One Supreme Queen⁶ of the three worlds has entrusted the people with the selection of the Judge. If, then, the people select a robber as their Judge, the Queen cannot be blamed therefor. While in such case the oppressiveness of the robber will, on the one hand, deprive the people of the spiritual wealth which is their greatest possession both here and hereafter, the revenue, on the other hand which they pay will not reach the

¹ Gurutva.

² Vicāraka.

³ Rājaniti.

⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*. Here religious and ethical rules of universal validity requiring universal allegiance as opposed to particular State laws.

⁵ Āhuti. Literally, offering.

World! where are you, O Mother! at this time! Rather the Mother is everywhere, but where are we ourselves? Had not the Mother been everywhere, had not Her eyes been wide open to see everything, and had not She with indomitable force spread the power of Her commands in every place, would the families of Siddha and Sādhaka Gurus,¹ the crest-gems of Āryāvarta,² which is the crown jewel of Bhāratavarṣa,³ have become thus extinct to-day? Would the race of Sādhakas devoted to Her who fulfils all Arthas (purposes and desires) have thus been exterminated for want of Sādhana and for the sake of Artha (money)? Would descendants of Brāhmaṇas, who had performed austere Tapas,⁴ have thus turned Caṇḍālas in habit? A blind man feels no discomfort in the dark, but he who can see is greatly frightened if the light in his room be extinguished. Malpractices⁵ do no harm to non-Āryas, but if families of Sādhakas forsake Sādhana they are naturally ruined. So it is, O Guru-Family! that doves nowadays roam over your homestead even at noon,⁶ and Dharma⁷ looks at it with eyes wide open. But so intoxicated are you with the wine of delusion that your closed eyes can no more be opened by any means. Such as you are, you yet teach your Śiṣya a Mantra of obeisance which runs "obeisance to the Guru who has, by means of the collyrium-stick of knowledge, opened the eye of him who was blinded by the darkness of ignorance." O Mother! dwelling in great cremation grounds,⁸ direct the band of Bhairavas⁹ to clear away the heavy mass of ashes which are, as it were, this sin. Command them to fan into flame the fire of the funeral pyre of Sat, Cit, and Ānanda,¹⁰ and to thus dispel the darkness of deep and crass ignorance in Bhāratavarṣa.¹¹ Let the children who have lost the Mother rediscover the Father with the help of this light even in the deep darkness of the present new-moon night. Let them run to Thee, O Mother! and find eternal rest at those lotus-feet which are fair as ten million autumn moons.

¹ That is, the Gurus who have attained and those who are seeking and on the way to attainment.

² The land of the Āryas.

³ India.

⁴ Devotion, austerities, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ Anācāra.

⁶ Roaming of doves is a mark of ruin and desolation.

⁷ Dharma (religious duty, etc., here religion personified) cannot bear the sight of any wrong, but here He is represented as looking on with indifference.

⁸ Smaśānas, where She in Her dread forms dwells.

⁹ Attendants of Mahādeva and Mahādevī.

¹⁰ The state of existence, consciousness, and bliss, which is the Brahman

THE GURU PROFESSION¹

In India there has been, along with political revolutions, a revolution in language; and people now speak of Gurugiri, or profession of Guru-hood.² Of all the means of earning money this profession of Guruhood is nowadays one of the best. In it the Paramārtha (the highest spiritual end) has joined with Artha (money), and from their union has been born an Anartha (evil). As a matter of fact, however, there has not been a union in the true sense between Paramārtha and Artha, and hence it is that this Anartha has come about; for a union between Paramārtha and Artha would have the effect rather of destroying than of creating Anarthas (evils).

However that may be, the community of Gurus who follow this profession is divided into two classes—namely, Prabhu (lord)³ and Vibhu (omnipresent).⁴ There is, moreover, another class which has taken the field recently—namely, the Svayambhu (self-existent). There is no need to explain what the first two classes are, or of whom they are composed. The name Prabhu has come into use through the grace of Prabhus. Nowadays, if anyone appears to be at all out of the common, people at once say: “He is a Prabhu”. As for the class of Vibhus, they are going to be Vibhu (etherealized) themselves through their constant efforts to show the Vibhu (the Omnipresent). Whether they be good or bad, the first two classes originally⁵ based themselves on the Śāstra. The third class which has succeeded them takes no heed, however, of any Śāstra. “These sober men are learned men in their own estimation.” “In their own estimation they are men of calm mind⁶ and learning. They pretend to teach “Yoga”. It is by long search in Purāṇas, historical works, and so forth, that one comes across the name of a Yogī here and a Yogī there. These had by centuries of Tapasyā⁷ at first acquired the title of “Muni” or “Ṛṣi,” and then after another hundred or thousand years received initiation in Yoga from a Devatā, or some great Yogī like a Devatā. But nowadays we have regular fairs of Yogīs on the river-side and in the field,⁸ and we often hear it said: “Such and such a Babu.

¹ Gurugiri.

² Though Guruhood can never properly be a profession.

³ Vaiṣṇava Gurus.

⁴ Referring to the Brahmos, who do not worship images or Brahman with form, but only the formless omnipresent.

⁵ Whatever be the subsequent developments leading away from Śāstra.

⁶ Dhīra—the first fruit of Yoga, and a quality highly prized.

⁷ Devotion, austerity, study, meditation, etc.

⁸ Hātemāthe. “In the fair and in the field” is a colloquial expression—

We know that even in that case there is no cause for fear, for in that nether world¹ also Mother Bhadrakālī is Herself the Saviour. We, however, are afraid, because we do not know how long it will be before we shall again see the face of Rāmachandra. We, however, know this also that if the Mother has determined to destroy Mahīrāvaṇa, then there is nothing which cannot happen in the kingdom of Mahāmāyā, who makes the impossible possible.² Still we say, O Society! do not forget to be on your guard; do not bring death on yourself by giving shelter to the Dharmarākṣasa³ in your house; do not, at this time when Dharma is being assailed, yourself attempt to weaken it.

Necessity has compelled us to say even a few words more than what is strictly warranted on the subject of Gurutattva. In conclusion, we say to the Prabhus and Vibhus,⁴ who follow the Guru profession, basing themselves on Śāstra, that they, too, are slowly approaching the condition of the Svayambhus, who compose the third class of Gurus. We are servants of the Śāstra, and he who destroys its authority is to us an eyesore, however accomplished⁵ he may be. To us nothing is of greater authority than the words of Bhagavān, who has Himself said, "He who performs religious acts according to his own will, and in violation of the rules laid down in the Śāstra, will not merely fail to attain Siddhi, but will go to hell." Professional Gurus, although the root of your profession is the Śāstra, its fruit, twig, leaf, flower, and all else are opposed to the Śāstra.

Whenever you see a Śiṣya, place, time, and person have no effect upon you; but taking him to be your prey, you pounce on his shoulder according to the rule—"should be eaten the moment when received." What Śāstra authorizes you to do this? Even a deadly poisonous snake when it has bitten someone remains senseless and feverish for a whole week. It is generally at such a time that snakes are, through their want of power of movement, killed. Similarly, energy passes from the body of the Guru to that of Śiṣya at the time of initiation, even if the former has previously greatly performed Tapas.⁶ In order to recoup himself the loss of this energy,⁷ the Guru has to perform for a great length of time Tapas,⁶

¹ Pātāla.

² That is, perhaps, these Mahīrāvaṇas have been only permitted to appear and take the sinful path that they may be eventually destroyed; for all is possible to Mahāmāyā.

³ Rākṣasa, or demon, in the garb of Dharma religion.

⁴ See *ante*.

⁵ Siddha.

⁶ Austerities, worship, and similar preparations undertaken with the view to kindle the fire of the Guru in the latter's body, and later to recoup the energy transmitted to the disciple.

as also Puraścaraṇa in the form of Japa¹ of the Mantra, which he has given in initiation. Thus only he can regain his normal state.² But you, the incarnations of abnormality,³ are in the habit of granting initiation at the rate of ten or twenty a day, as animals are offered for sacrifice on the great Navamī⁴ day. Race of Prabhus, the saviours of the helpless, can you say what will be your fate? In you are combined a venomous power to bite, and boa-like capacity of eating. You are shaking with the fever of delusion and stuffed with food up to the throat. O Prabhu! behold and see that the Prabhu (Lord) who punished the Kāliya Snake⁵ has to-day come to test your power and authority. Even now, while there is yet time, touch the beauteous feet of the Lord of Lakṣmī and say: "Lord of the helpless, friend of the poor, I have reaped the consequence of disobedience to Thy commands, destroy the sins of this sinner, who has sought protection at Thy feet, and punish him with the rod of Thy grace. Let me be blessed with the touch of Thy beauteous feet." And on your behalf we, too, say: "Bhagavān, the chief purpose of Thy play⁶ is to lighten the earth of the weight of unrighteousness, which oppresses it in India. To-day the weight Gurus has become a heavy burden. All merciful Deva, who but Thee can remove it? The race of Āryas is sorely oppressed with initiation; the waters of the Jumna are terribly poisoned by his deadly snake, which is the race of Gurus. O Lord, colour for once the gem on the head of this snake with the colour of Thy spotless lotus-feet, which are like the red lotuses.⁷ With a thrust of Thy feet free the earth of the poison fang which is self-seeking and drive this snake from Jambūdvīpa⁸ to Ramanakadvīpa,⁹

¹ "Recitation" of the Mantra according to the Śāstrik injunctions. This, when done under certain prescribed conditions, is the rite known as Puraścaraṇa.

² Prakṛti.

³ Vikṛti.

⁴ The Durga pūja begins on the seventh lunar day of the bright fortnight, and lasts till the ninth or Navamī day, on which a large number of animals are sacrificed.

⁵ Kṛṣṇa, who killed Kāliya. This was a demon in the form of a snake which lived in a lake. Its presence made the lake so poisonous that fish could not live therein, cows could not drink its water, and birds flying over it fell dead. Kṛṣṇa jumped into the lake and subdued the serpent, and compelled it to return to the sea.

⁶ Līlā.

⁷ That is, the Devatā is invoked to stand on the snake when the red painted soles of the Deva will be reflected in the gem on the head of the snake.

⁸ India.

⁹ One of the seven islands. The author takes advantage of the etymological meaning of Ramanaka, or that which gives pleasure, to make reference

the seat of your everlasting Rasa festivities. Let men and women, boys and girls, bathe with faithful hearts in the waters of initiation and cool their minds and hearts. Himavān,¹ Niṣadha, Vindhya, Sumeru, Malaya vān, and many other mountains,² are situated in Jambūdvīpa,³ but, O Lord, no mountain is so unbearable⁴ as this Guru profession.⁵ We have heard that you held Mount (Giri) Govardhana. This makes us hope that some day Thou wilt surely hold this profession (Giri) either by Thy foot or by Thy hand, for by the ill-fortune of India this profession (Giri) also has become Govarddhana, thus fostering the ignorant.⁶ Thou didst uphold Mount Govarddhana in order to shatter the pride of the King of Devas.⁷ Once again, O Lord! Thou wilt have to hold it in order to shatter the pride of the King of the Kali Yuga. It was Thou who as Mount Govarddhana didst receive the worship of the herdsmen, and Thou Thyself must receive worship as Guru Govarddhana (increaser of the race of Guru).⁸ The punishment of Kāliya⁹ and the upholding of Mount Govarddhana were both Thy play.⁹ Now, O Thou who art full of play,⁹ the field has been prepared for both these plays.⁹ It remains only that Thou Thyself should incarnate. And to Thee, Daughter of the King of Mountains,¹⁰ we say, O Mother! Thou hast said that a Guru who gives Mantra is also Thy father's Guru, and so stands to Thee as Thy grandfather. If for fear of destroying the Guru's glory of the mountain-family of Thy father, Thou showest indulgence to this Guru profession, then we shall be obliged to stand before our Father, the Lord of Bhairavas, and the Dakṣayajña¹¹ is the outstanding proof of the little

¹ Himālaya.

² Giri.

³ See *ante*.

⁴ Kṛṣṇa upheld Govarddhana when Indra deluged the surrounding country with continuous rain, and thus gave shelter to people and the cattle.

⁵ Gurugiri; a play on the word Giri, which, as an independent word, means mountain, and as suffix in Bengali means profession.

⁶ A play on the word Govarddhana, which means that which increases (Vardhana) cows (Go). The ignorant are spoken of as a race of cows, the number of which is increased by these so-called but incompetent Gurus.

⁷ Indra (see *ante*).

⁸ Kṛṣṇa must uphold the race of Gurus as he upheld the mountain. He must raise the race from their depressed condition. Then the race of Gurus will be worthy of worship, as was Mount Govarddhana after Kṛṣṇa had raised it. The Gurus are compared to Govarddhana.

⁹ Līlā.

¹⁰ The Devī Pārvatī, daughter of Himālaya, the Mountain King.

¹¹ The sacrifice of Dakṣa, Śiva's father-in-law which the latter destroyed.

forgiveness he accords to the family of his father-in-law.¹ And then the remedy will surely be attained. But in that case, O Mother! a blemish and rebuke will for ever attach to Thy father's family. Hence we pray you as a good daughter to find out a remedy for all this while there is yet time. Do you yourselves settle in private a question which concerns you privately?

"O Guru family! do not attempt to become a Guru in order to save Śiṣyas, but prepare yourselves to become a Śiṣya for your own saving. Then by the grace of Guru the world will become your Śiṣya. Had you yourself learnt how to worship a Guru, to-day you would not have had to suffer indignities, moving from door to door amongst Śiṣyas. If a patricide's son is educated after the notions of his father, he is sure to turn out a patricide himself. Similarly, by receiving initiation from a Guru like yourself, who is estranged from his Guru, your Śiṣya has to-day become ready to ruin you. It is useless to mourn over this, for you are reaping the consequence of your own action. Had you yourself been Siddha,² or, at least, a Sādhaka,³ your Śiṣya might some day have become a Sādhaka. Had you been a servant of your Guru's house, esteeming it to be Bṛndāvana or Kāśī⁴ itself, innumerable men and women would to-day have left Kāśī and Bṛndāvana that they might prostrate themselves in the dust at your door. But instead of that you are to-day a Guru only in name. Like a servant, you appear at the door of your miscreant Śiṣya to receive your annual due from him, only to be driven away like a dog; or you heartily approve of his evil practices in the hope of eating the remnants of his food. Know that it is the powerful influence of the Kali Yuga which prevents a thunderbolt from falling on your head. Even here the sorrowful tale does not end. In luxurious feasts, where wine and women of the town hold sway, the Guru is to-day engaged in cooking, for in the opinion of the Śiṣya the Guru is an hereditary slave bought for nothing. Dharmarāja,⁵ Yamadeva! has hell become so full that it cannot afford room to these men, whose proper place is there? Save, O Bhagavān! This current of abominable sin will bring on a great untimely dissolution⁶ and destroy the world.⁷ Gurus! forgive us. We

¹ A playful threat against the Devī. The author prays that She will remedy this evil of the Gurus. If She be unwilling to do so for fear of destroying the Guru glory of her father's family, well, the author will go to Her husband Śiva, who, as the Dakṣayajña showed, will not scruple to deal with this evil.

² Perfected.

³ That is, one seeking such perfection and power of accomplishment.

⁴ That is, the town of Bṛndāvan, sacred to Krishna and the holy city of

⁵ A name of Yama, the God of Death.

shall not draw this picture of hell any more. O Mother, Jagadambā! ¹ Thou art the Mother of the World. Be Thy sons good or bad, all this. O Mother! is Thy play. We know that Thou canst never forsake us. Hence with tears in our eyes we say, O Mother! what play is this of Thine to throw Thy babes in arms in the dust? O Devī! beauteous with the dark hue of clouds laden with water! O merciful Mother! with a copious shower of mercy from that three-eyed spring, ² the Devī Herself, which removes the threefold sorrows ³ of the three worlds, wash away for once the mud of infamy which soils the Guru family in India; and showing Thy real self to Thine erring children, lift them to Thy bosom with Thy lotus-hands, which bestow blessing and dispel fear. ⁴ Paint, then, their soiled and vice-tainted eyes with the collyrium ⁵ of Thy love. O Thou, who grantest all desires! O Mother! who art the highest object of all desires, ⁶ Thou art all to Śiva and the most precious to His heart. If to-day Jīva Thy son is able to hold those Beauteous Feet, the treasure which even Śiva by His Sādhana seeks to gain, then, O Queen of queens of the Universe, ⁷ of what can he be in want? What poverty is it which can then oppress him and drive him to take (humble) stand at the door of his Śiṣya? O Mother! stand forth as Mother taking up Thy son in Thy arms. Let all the world touch Thy son's ⁸ feet after it has first rested at Thy feet. Make the world of Śiṣyas know that in order to understand what a Guru ⁹ is, one must know Thee first, and that Guru, who is only Thyself in a loving form, is weightier ¹⁰ than thee. And let them hear the most secret and profound converse between Thee the Mother and Thy son, that loving and endearing welcome, which is Mantra. To hear and understand this is to destroy the discipleship of the Śiṣya, the Guruhood of the Guru, the Mantra-nature ¹¹ of Mantra, and the strife and struggle to attain to Thee. With such destruction all disappears in that unity which is the great truth that 'when all is gone

¹ The Devī as mother of the world.

² Her three eyes are compared to a spring of water.

³ Ādhyātmik, or mental and physical troubles; ādibhautik, produced by the world, other men, animals, etc.; ādhidaivik, or danger from Devas and Spirits.

⁴ The Devī's hands are represented making the gestures (mudrā) of granting boons (varamudrā) and dispelling fear (abhaya mudrā).

⁵ Añjana, used to clear the vision.

⁶ Paramārtha svarūpiṇī.

⁷ Rājārājeśvarī.

⁸ The Guru. If people get faith in the Devī, then they will respect the Guru.

⁹ Lit., gurutattva.

¹⁰ Gurutara; play on the word Guru, which as a noun means "spiritual

'Thyself alone remains.' Let us sink in the unity which is Gurutattva, Mantratattva, and Thy Tattva. If, however, it causes Thee great pain to destroy these three Tattvas which are so dear to Thee, then be Thou at least gracious to make us understand that ¹ which the destroyer of Kāma ² has himself described as follows in the Kāmākhyā Tantra: 'The Devī's favour must be secured first, and then the favour of Śrīguru. After this, there is generated single-minded devotion to the lotus-feet of the Supreme Devatā, through the influence of the great Mantra, which issues from the Guru's mouth. That single-minded devotion makes the Sādhana pure; out of that pure Sādhana arises pure knowledge; and that pure knowledge leads to the attainment of the highest liberation of Jīva. This is the truth. This is the command of Śāstra.' "

THE CHARACTERISTICS ¹ OF DISCIPLES

Nowadays, as there is no one to criticize the editor of a newspaper, whilst the latter criticizes the whole world, so there is none to criticize the characteristics of Śiṣyas whilst they criticize all Gurus.⁴ Just as no one who stands by the side of the sharpened hundred-tongued quill of the editor has the right to say anything about him, so the race of Gurus when standing before the Śiṣyas, so heroic in speech, can say nothing. For to the single tongue of the Guru there are a hundred of the Śiṣyas. At the most the Guru will perhaps try to explain one or two things to the Śiṣya in a few words in Sanskrit, but then the Śiṣya will most probably drive him away with his ridicule in English. The Śiṣya will test the Guru on the touchstone of Śāstra, but the Guru will stare blankly at the gilt on the Śiṣya, for Jñāna ⁵ is all that the Guru possesses, whilst the Śiṣya is strong with the weapon of Vi-jñāna.⁶ Society complains that it is no longer possible to obtain a Guru such as the Śāstra indicates. From this it would seem that there is now no want of Śiṣyas, who are competent to be such according to the Śāstra. We are, however, ourselves at a loss to know whether it is the Guru or the Śiṣya who is the more rare to find. Even to-day

¹ Literally, the tattva.

² Śiva, who destroyed Kāma, the God of Love, with a flash of fire from His third eye when the latter sought to disturb Him from His Yoga, that He might unite with His spouse Pārvatī for the creation of a son (Kārtikeya).

³ Śiṣya.

⁴ After administering due rebuke to the Gurus for their incompetency, the author proceeds to deal with the failings of the present-day disciples.

⁵ Spiritual knowledge which produces liberation.

it is not impossible to find ten good Gurus out of every hundred. But does one find even a single Śiṣya out of a thousand who is competent to be a disciple according to the Śāstra? Whatever is necessary in any fashion, for any purpose or in any place in this universe has been provided for even before its creation by the Mother. It is impossible that She who has been careful to create the mother's breast with its milk, which provides food for the baby after birth, has not created competent Gurus for religious-minded Śiṣyas. As a matter of fact, just as competent Gurus are never in want of competent Śiṣyas, so competent Śiṣyas are never in want of competent Gurus.¹ The Śāstra has, therefore, said, "In the matter of Devatā, Tirtha,² Dvija,³ Mantra, Daivajña,⁴ medicine and Guru, each person achieves results therefrom according to his thought; that is to say, one achieves visible results in proportion to one's faith in them. Nowadays many people have acquired the habit of despising the race of Gurus on the supposition of their being incompetent. But how many of these people consider whether they themselves are competent to become Śiṣyas? Considering the amount of competence which you and I possess, it is sheer presumption on our part to deem the entire race of Gurus to be incompetent. Boys and young men stirred by the recent agitation over the subject of the Sanātana Dharma⁵ and whose meagre equipment consists of a knowledge of such matters as history, fiction, novel-writing, and of acting and the like, are busy in the occupation of selecting Gurus. A section of them have come to the conclusion that by "Guru" is meant "a prince of Yogīs sitting with closed eyes in the lotus posture⁶ on the snowclad summit of the Himālaya, or in a solitary mountain cave, or in a thatched hut in the midst of some great forest outside the pale of human habitation, and surrounded by tame⁷ wild animals." I admit that such a person is a good Guru, but of what avail is he to you or me? True that an infinite store of precious gems exists in the womb of the unfathomable sea, but of what use is it to you or me? What can you or I expect from him who has forgotten the dualistic waves of the ocean, and has sunk to its depths wherein is the monistic truth?⁸ True that I am thirsty, and am standing on the bank of the river, but the water lies at a great depth below the top

¹ It is a common saying that he who is fit for and truly deserves a Guru will surely find one.

² Place of pilgrimage; here the efficacy which is attributed to it.

³ A twice-born; here a Brāhmaṇa.

⁴ Diviner, foreteller.

⁵ The Hindu religion.

⁶ Padmāsana, a common form of Āsana in Yoga.

⁷ Wild animals do not fear or hurt the Yogī.

of the bank. I cannot cross that steep mountain-like formidable shore and descend into the water, and yet my life cannot be saved without it. What is to be done in such a case? Am I to beg water of one who has sunk and lost himself in the mid-current of the river, the flow of whose sense functions have mingled with that current of the river; who, though he is "who" to me is no longer "he" to himself? Am I to beg of one who will not deign to turn his eyes even if countless Jivas like myself were to break their heads on the bank? To him it is nothing whether the world is safe or the great dissolution¹ untimely threatens. The entire universe has not the value of a straw to him. Can you and I expect to be reckoned as even atoms in his eyes? I can get water from the man who has crossed the shore and descended into the water, but has not yet reached the bottomless stream. For us and the ordinary people the Śāstra has therefore said, "and a householder who knows the import of all Śāstras is called a Guru," and again, "a Guru for rites relating to Devas, Pitṛs, or both, should be a house-holder and fellow-countryman." To him who has risen above false dualism the relation of Guru and Śiṣya is nothing but a flower in the ether.²

Many people are willing to take initiation only if they can get householders like Yājñavalkya or Vāsiṣṭha for their Gurus, otherwise not. But they do not stop to consider that in order to obtain such Gurus they themselves must be Śiṣyas, like Rājaṛṣi Janaka,³ or Bhagavān Rāmachandra.⁴ Doubtless everyone has his ambitions, but if they exceed the bounds of possibility men call them mad. If one proceeds to read fiction without understanding it, one is reduced to the plight of Duryodhana in the court of Yudhiṣṭhira's⁵ Rājasūya⁶ Yajña. To fasten one's heart in the mould of novels and fulfil its unreasonable desires, and to acquire competence from Siddhi and Sādhana by seeking shelter at the feet of Guru, are not one and the same thing. Only such a man who has gone into the water can do me good as can come out of it, and either bring water to me who am on land, or can take me with

¹ Mahāpralaya.

² Ākāśakusuma; the Sanskrit form of the expressions "castle in the air".

³ Sītā's father; Rāma's father-in-law.

⁴ Son of Daśaratha, hero of Rāmāyaṇa, incarnation of Viṣṇu.

⁵ When Yudhiṣṭhira did the Rājasūya Yajña, a Gandharva prepared for him a carpet, the design on which was so natural that in crossing the room in which it was, Duryodhana took a tank which was represented on it to be real water, and tucked up his clothes lest they should be wetted, on which all the assembly laughed, to the discomfiture of Duryodhana.

⁶ Yajñarab at the time of his

him from the land to the water. There may be countless Siddhas¹ who are lying submerged in the water, but there is no means by which I may derive any benefit from them. But I shall be gratified if I get a kind hearted person who is half-sunk or almost sunk, or has just entered into the water. Hence for all persons belonging to the household Āsrama, householders make the best Gurus. Some people, again, think that one should not take initiation from a Guru without first gauging the extent of his knowledge and intelligence. It is difficult to restrain one's laughter at this idea. If before going to school a boy can measure the extent of his teacher's knowledge and intelligence, then what is the necessity of his going to school at all? One must make an offering of one's ignorance to whomsoever one accepts as one's Guru. This is the natural law in the world of Guru and Śiṣya. Unless one is ignorant, there is no necessity to take a Guru. The Śāstra therefore says, "I bow to the Guru by whom is opened with the collyrium-stick² of knowledge the eye blinded by the darkness of ignorance." To desire to test the knowledge and intelligence of the Guru is tantamount to the wish to see that which our parents have done in their childhood. As notwithstanding that parents have at one time been children, they are already youths when they become parents; so in spite of a Guru having been ignorant at one time, he is already an unfathomable sea of knowledge when he initiates you or I; otherwise, if the Guru who is to impart knowledge to the Śiṣya is himself ignorant, it is impossible to be initiated by him. I can examine only that subject of which I have knowledge. But to proceed to examine a subject of which I know nothing is tantamount to exhibiting my own ignorance. Maybe that I am a passed degree-holder in many subjects. But does this entitle me to be an examiner of a Guru? Perhaps the Guru is not a passed degree-holder like myself, but what of that? I am, despite of my being well educated in all subjects, a perfect ignoramus in the field of Sādhana, and the Guru is, notwithstanding his ignorance of all subjects, a past master³ in Siddhi and Sādhana. What I have to learn from him is unknown to me even in dream. It is, therefore, the height of impertinence, presumption and foolishness on my part to try, blinded as I am by the vanity of worldly knowledge, to test that spiritual knowledge which is the possession of the Guru. There is nothing which I can teach the Guru, but my own knowledge is so little that I can spend a life-time in seeking to increase it.

There is, moreover, another class of men who are charmed by the glamour of love-maddening plays, or by speech or writing, and are

¹ Perfect men who have attained Siddhi.

² Añjana, which clears the vision.

anxious to become Dhruvas¹ or Prahlādas² ten times every hour. Yoga, Yajña, Tapasyā,³ and such other things, again are eyesores to them. They think in their minds: "I will melt Hari by weeping tears of play,⁴ whether my mind and heart possess even a smack of devotion or not. I will be in the world an ideal devotee, for I have heard that a devotee does not require to perform Japa,⁵ Tapas,⁶ worship, adoration, or anything of the kind." All talk of knowledge is, as it were, forbidden by their Dharma. For the fruit of knowledge is liberation, and as Vaiṣṇava books say, "Devotion⁷ is superior to knowledge,⁸ and liberation⁹ is its handmaid," they are devotees, and do not want liberation. It is as if liberation were prostrating itself in the dust with tears in its eyes before them, praying that it be accepted, and with annoyance they say: "Be off! We don't want you!" Nowadays such men are found in abundance in quarters where live unbelievers¹⁰ in disguise, who carry the banner of Hinduism, but are actually devoid of all Dharma.¹¹ Whatever be the acts of unrighteousness they may commit, they are found not guilty, and acquitted on their performing Saṅkīrtana¹² to the accompaniment of a Kholā¹³ in the evening at the close of every week. In their opinion any Mantra or form of worship other than this "cry of Hari in a tumult"¹⁴ belongs to the province of the lowest grade of worshippers. However that may be, through the indifference and shortsightedness of preachers of religion (Dharma), and the strong forbearance of the Ārya Society, which nothing can move, this community is daily receiving such indulgence that the creation of Non-Ārya Society—in fact but dubbed with the name of Ārya Society—is undoubtedly inevitable. The band of these pseudo-Prahlādas¹⁵ think

¹ Rāja Uttānapāda's son, a great devotee for whom Viṣṇu made the Dhruvaloka. The Pole star is called Dhruva.

² Son of Hiranyakaśipu, and a great devotee of Viṣṇu.

³ Yoga, sacrifice, austerity, etc.

⁴ That is, by feigning weeping.

⁵ Recitation of Mantras (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ See *ante*.

⁷ Bhakti.

⁸ Jñāna.

⁹ Mukti.

¹⁰ Nāstika.

¹¹ That is, who really do not belong to it.

¹² Dancing and singing the name of Hari (Viṣṇu), as Vaiṣṇavas do.

¹³ An elongated, drum-shaped, musical instrument used in Saṅkīrtana. The reference is to Brahmos, who hold weekly prayer-meetings after the manner of the Christians.

¹⁴ Gole·Haribol—slang for doing a thing perfunctorily—e.g., where a large number of people cry Hari together, one of them may himself cry without care or heart for what he does and without notice.

that all Gurus are like Ṣaṇḍa and Amarka,¹ and cite the case of Prahlāda to show that there is no necessity to take a Guru. They, however, do not stop even once to consider that if everyone can be a Prahlāda by becoming a devotee in this fashion, why then has there been only one Prahlāda during all these ages? In the infinite world of moving and unmoving things infinite numbers of devotees to Bhagavān have been born. But why has there not been born another like Prahlāda? Why has not Bhagavān stood before any other devotee in the form of half-man, half-lion?² Is devotion to Bhagavān (it is said) so partial towards one party that it cannot reveal its own power³ to any person other than Prahlāda? If the respect that is paid to Prahlāda is due to this sort of devotion, then it is difficult to count the number of Prahlādas which exist in this Samsāra.⁴ Herein a little knowledge of the truth as told in the Śāstra is necessary. Unable to bear any longer the oppressions of Hiranyakaśipu, Brahmā and other Devas sought the protection of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Bhagavān said to them: "Wait a little time more. So long as he does not become the enemy of his own self (Ātmā), the store of his sins will not be full, and I, too, shall not be able to destroy him." The Devas were astonished, and asked: "Lord, a Jīva never becomes an enemy of his own self. How then can this be possible?" Bhagavān replied: "You need not be afraid; it is the self indeed which is born as a son,⁵ and I myself shall take birth as his son." The Devas understood the plane of the crest gem of the cunning⁶ and were assured. In order to accomplish the purpose of the Devas, Bhagavān incarnated Himself as Prahlāda as a son of the King of Daityas⁷ in the womb of Kayādhū. Now, is it not beyond the possibility of even a dream that that which happened to Prahlāda, the incarnation of Bhagavān Himself in the form of a devotee, should happen to you, me, or anybody else? Because He showed a divinely brilliant example of an unflinching devotion to Himself by His incarnation as a devotee in order to create a feeling of enmity in Hiranyakaśipu, is it possible that you and I should show the same? Hari, Hari, Hari!⁸ If this could happen, why should He Himself have incarnated as Prahlāda?

And did He, on being incarnated as Prahlāda, show His devotion without first taking a Guru? Those who are ignorant of the Śāstra may

¹ Gurus to whom Prahlāda's father sent him for education, and who tried to dissuade Prahlāda from worship of Viṣṇu.

² Viṣṇu took this form as Nṛsimha avatāra to destroy Prahlāda's unbelieving father for his persecution of the latter on account of his devotion to Viṣṇu.

³ Vibhūti. ⁴ That is to say, there are innumerable Prahlādas in it.

⁵ The father is born as the son.

⁶ Chakrī. ⁷ Hiranyakaśipu.

⁸ Famous words of the T. K. K.

easily come to the conclusion that Prahlāda had no Guru. But learned men and Sādhus conversant with Śāstra know that when Hiranyakaśipu was away from home and in war the King of Devas¹ stole away Kayādhū² from the unguarded Daitya City with the object of destroying her and the child in her womb. On the way Nārada, the Divine Ṛṣi, questioned him, saying: "King of Devas! why this wickedness in taking away a woman with child?" Indra replied with confidence: "O thou whose wealth is Tapas,³ the kingdom of Devas is on the point of being utterly destroyed by Hiranyakaśipu's oppression. If after this the father and the son unite to commit oppressions, the three worlds will be destroyed. From fear of this I have determined to kill the Daitya's Queen along with the child in her womb, for I do not see any other means of averting the danger." The Divine Ṛṣi laughed and said: "King of Devas, stay your hand. This child has been conceived, and will be born for the very purpose of bringing to an end the oppressions of Daityas. You have no need to destroy the child in the womb, for this child is destined to reinstate the tutelary goddess of good fortune⁴ of the race of Suras." Trusting the Ṛṣi's words, the King of Devas released the Daitya Queen, and went away to his own place. Kayādhū then fell at the Ṛṣi's feet, weeping, and said: "Lord, seeing me helpless, the King of Devas stole me away, and now through your grace I am safe from him; but how can I now go to the Daitya City? Even if a chaste woman of respectable family thus falls into the hands of an enemy, no one believes that she remains inviolate. Moreover, if the King of Daityas comes to know of that which has happened, he will most surely abandon me. O Lord! of what use is life to me if it be made unbearable through public calumny, abandonment of my husband, and the burden of pregnancy? But how, on the other hand, can I surrender a body which bears a child? Father! save me from this terrible dilemma." Seeing the Daitya Queen to be in such great danger, the Divine Ṛṣi said: "Mother! fear not that your virtue may be impugned; for that I am your witness. For the present do you stay in my hermitage until Hiranyakaśipu, your husband, returns. Then you will go with him to the Daitya City." Approving of the Divine Ṛṣi's assuring words, Kayādhū stayed in Nārada's hermitage, during which time He explained to her, at her request, the Yoga of devotion⁵ to Bhagavān. Bhagavān, incarnated as a devotee, took Nārada, the Guru of Devas, as His Guru, and Himself practised the Yoga of devotion⁵ to Himself while still living in the womb. The effect of that devotion⁵ was the assumption by Bhagavān of a half-man, half-lion

¹ Indra.

² Hiranyakaśipu's wife.

³ Austerity, devotion, study, self-restraint, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra*

form.¹ Now, seeing that Bhagavān Himself, the treasure which all devotees worship, made His own devotee² His Guru, whilst learning devotion to Himself, it is the height of ignorance to say to-day that Prahlāda had no Guru. Bhagavān is almighty. It is not possible that He who could burst through a crystal column and assume a wonderful half-man, half-lion³ form, full of brilliance, could not preach the Yoga of devotion to Himself without instruction from a Guru. But still, in order to uphold the honour of Śāstra, the Guru of the three worlds became a disciple⁴ Himself, and making His own disciple His Guru whilst He lived in the womb, He issued from it as a Siddha.⁵ Now, Sādhakas should understand that even He, devotion to Whom, even when simulated,⁶ makes us proud, carried out an intricate scheme by making the King of Devas into an instrument for upholding the glory of Guruhood, and yet to-day we imagine Prahlāda an ordinary son of a Daitya, and proceed to quote him as a precedent on the supposed ground that he had no Guru.⁷ Marvellous is our audacity! Marvellous also are our intelligence and education, and marvellous, too, will be our inevitable downfall! Hence we say, do not imagine yourselves to be new Prahlādas, mistaking a play of Daityahood to be one of Devahood, and a play of Brahmahood to be one of Jivahood.⁸ Do not thus be foolish according to the wish of Īśvara.⁹ Dwarfs that you are, do not stretch out your hands to catch the moon; mere flies that you are, do not jump into a pit of flaming fire, where you will be reduced to ashes.

There is also another class of persons who think that a man can never be a man's Guru; that a man's Guru is Īśvara, and that to obey Him means to follow the teachings which He from time to time gives through the dictates of our intelligence and our heart. These people consider

¹ Nṛsimha, in which He appeared to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu.

² Nārada. ³ Nṛsimha. ⁴ Śiṣya.

⁵ One who is perfect.

⁶ Men pretend to be devoted to Him, and take pride in showing themselves off as devotees, so great is the glory of Him to Whom they offer their simulated devotion.

⁷ That is, because after His birth there is no mention of His having a Guru. But Prahlāda was Viṣṇu, and had a Guru when in his mother's womb—namely, Nārada—for the latter gave the mother instructions, which the child heard. So also Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son, learnt the art of warfare in his mother's womb.

⁸ That is, do not misunderstand. This was an exceptional case, due to the fact that Prahlāda was not a Daitya, but Deva; and not a mere Jiva, but Brahman.

⁹ All which is done, whether by way of wisdom or folly, is done at Īśvara's command. Perhaps the meaning also is that in so far as Īśvara is the creator, His desire as such is that men should not follow the path of liberation.

Nature (Prakṛti) to be the Supreme Guru. Mountains, woods, groves, clouds, lightning, rivers, seas, and lakes are all Gurus according to them. But we hold that a conscious human society cannot be built with the aid of such unconscious things. Unaided Nature¹ can be the Guru of trees, creepers, birds, and beasts, but never of men. Immediately a cow brings forth a calf, the latter rises up and seeks its mother's udder according to the law of Prakṛti (Nature); but on the birth of a human child the loving mother must forget the pains of labour, and with her own hand hold her breast up to its mouth, otherwise its desire to drink its mother's milk is not gratified. A calf one month old will, if thrown into water, easily swim across it according to Prakṛti's teaching. But throw a boy of ten or even twenty years of age into water, and (unless he has learnt swimming from another man) he will founder and die. Sādhakas should know that it is the same people who through their rejection of a human Guru, and dependence on Nature¹ as their guide,² have been reduced to such miserable plight in the waters of a mere tank, who are prepared to cross the ocean of existence ten times every half an hour in the name of Prakṛti-Guru, and who also call on others to accompany them. If your desire to emulate birds and beasts were one which was capable of fulfilment, then, O Śiṣya of Prakṛti!³ your body also would have been similarly built. In fact, you do not understand Prakṛti, whose Śiṣya you boast yourself to be. This is greatly to be regretted. What Jīva is there in this universe who is not a Śiṣya of Prakṛti? From the appearance of a Jīva to his reabsorption in Parabrahman every faculty or act of body, speech, and mind is regulated according to the law of Prakṛti. It is neither the mark of intelligence to say, nor is it the teaching of Śāstra, that the four faculties of eating, sleeping, fearing,⁴ and of sexual intercourse, are alone governed by Prakṛti. Bhagavān Himself has said to Arjuna: "Jīvas follow their individual Prakṛti (Nature). How can it be forcibly suppressed?"⁵ A person is born in a particular caste according to the decree of fate⁶ and the fruits of his action⁷ in previous lives. He can only attain Siddhi through the Ācāra⁸ and Mantra in which he

¹ Prakṛti.

² Guru.

³ Disciple of Nature.

⁴ Bhaya—this is a common, though to us a peculiar, classification of faculties. Fear is considered inherent in the Jīva's nature, and he can no more shake it off than he can shake off the desire to eat and sleep, etc.

⁵ Nigraha. That is, Nature cannot altogether be crushed. It will recur. It is only by the slow process of Sādhana that it can be modified.

⁶ Adṛṣṭa. That is, the unseen cause of that which makes him what he is and impels his action.

⁷ Karma.

⁸ The way or practice which he as a member of such caste and holding

has been initiated by Prakṛti.¹ The Śāstra says that he whom Prakṛti has made a Brāhmaṇa must attain the state of Brahman through the Ācāra² of a Brāhmaṇa. Just as looking at things from their gross aspect it is impossible to turn a beast into a man, so also if their subtle aspect be considered it is impossible to convert a Caṇḍāla into a Brāhmaṇa.³ Had Prakṛti surrendered all Her claim on a Jīva after his birth, then it might have been possible some day to bring about such a change of caste. But when Prakṛti does not release Jīva, but, on the contrary, his relationship with Her subsists till the moment immediately preceding complete liberation, it is by no means possible to avoid Her rule. According to the ordinance of Guru Prakṛti, an unconscious hill or mountain can never be the Guru of a conscious man, and thus take the place of a conscious human being. But it is also a wonderful freak of Prakṛti Herself that one who is himself a man can feel ashamed to call another conscious man his Guru, but feels not the least shame in calling an unconscious hill or mountain such.

Some people, again, conclude that if work is truly done by the potency of Mantra, there is no necessity to take a Guru. Why should not a Mantra taken by one's own self from the Śāstra lead to Siddhi? Although we have indirectly answered this question while discussing the subject of Gurus, yet we ask, Why should not such people also hold that the potency of Mantra⁴ is without effect where a Guru is not taken? For the necessity of taking a Guru is as much asserted in the Śāstra as the potency of a Mantra. What sort of faith is it which accepts one part of the Śāstra and rejects another?

The Śāstra says: "All Japa is based on initiation, all Tapasyā⁵ is based on initiation. It is under the shelter of initiation that one should live in Brahmacharya, Gārhastha, and Vānaprastha Āśramas.⁶ O Beloved Devī! the performance without previous initiation of Japa, Pūjā,⁷ and so forth, is like the sowing of seeds on a rock. As such seeds will never bear fruit, nor will such acts. O Devī! an uninitiate attains neither a good state⁸ nor Siddhi. For this reason one should by all means receive initiation from a Guru. If a person dies uninitiated, he goes to the Raurava Hell. One should therefore take care to receive initiation from

¹ That is, Nature has made him Adhikārī for a particular Ācāra or Mantra. Nature here is only the resultant of his previous Karma.

² The way or practice which he as a member of such caste and holding such and such a position in it has to follow.

³ That is, from one of the lowest castes into the highest.

⁴ Mantrasākti.

⁵ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Ceremonial worship.

Tāntrik Guru. If a man without being initiated by a Guru takes a Mantra which he reads in a book, then even a thousand Manvantaras¹ will not end the sufferings in hell of that worst of men. O Queen of Devas! initiation taken according to the Śāstra at once consumes lakhs² of sins and crores² of greater sins.³ It does not become an intelligent person to say that because when a lamp is lighted a man can see things for himself there is therefore no necessity to light the lamp. If a Sādhaka has acquired the necessary Śāstrik competence, he can by virtue of Mantraśakti⁴ endow even an unconscious image with consciousness.

But in order to awaken Mantraśakti⁴ a Guru is, like a lamp, necessary. It is true that the work will be done by the Mantraśakti, but who but a Guru has the power to awaken it? Just as a wick can, when lighted, burn and illuminate according to the quantity of its combustible substance, but in order to light it another flame is required, so similarly for the uninitiated a Guru in whom there is Divine Power, Sādhana and Siddhi is necessary. Such powers, however, exist in conscious beings only, and not in unconscious things. Among conscious beings also they can exist only in a Devatā who is fully conscious, or in a Devatā-like great man. This is why the Śāstra ordains that a Siddha or Sādhaka man should be taken as Guru, and not creepers, leaves, hills, or mountains. Whatever may be the process, such initiation and Sādhana as are spoken of in the Śāstra can never be accomplished without a Guru. It is true that the account of a country contains descriptions of its roads, but if a person is suddenly faced by a danger in the midst of these roads, how is he to be saved? As none but he who is fully acquainted with the road can know how to save him, so, although the Śāstra contains accounts of Sādhana and Siddhi, yet when some superhuman⁵ difficulty arises in the course of Sādhana, none but a Guru can save from it. The Śāstra has therefore said: "If the Iṣṭadeva becomes wrathful, the Guru can save a Sādhaka; but if the Guru becomes angered, neither the Iṣṭadevatā alone nor even all Devatās together can save him." The meaning of all this will not probably be understood in a society without Sādhana, but even now in India incidents frequently occur which reveal the truth of these infallible commands which have issued from the beauteous mouth of Bhagavān Himself. Many Sādhakas who have reached a high stage of

¹ A Manvantara is the one-fourteenth part of a Kalpa, or day of Brahmā, which is 4,320,000,000 years.

² A lakh equals 100,000, and a crore equals 10,000,000.

³ Sins are divided into upapātaka (venial sins), pātaka (greater sins), and Mahāpātaka (great sins), though generally the classification is into the two last classes.

⁴ The power inherent in, or which more strictly is, Mantra itself.

development are yet overthrown by the displeasure of the Guru, notwithstanding their good equipment of Sādhana, and become as low and destitute of lustre as stars which have fallen from the firmament. Again, we often see persons without Sādhana or purity of body, speech, or mind, without, in fact, anything to speak of in the way of Sādhana or worship, but who have ever in their mouths the cry, "Victory to Thee, O Guru! O Śrīguru!" both in prosperity and in adversity. And yet by the mercy of Her who is merciful, that Sādhaka easily acquires by his worship of Her in Her aspect as Guru, but for a very short time, the fruit which he could not acquire by lifelong worship of Her in Her aspect as Iṣṭadevatā. He whose heart constantly rings with the triumphant clarion call to Siddhi¹ through austere Sādhana, whose heroic feet are restless to dance a leaping² furious dance in the field of battle, full of horror and intense darkness, and whose strength of Siddhi is ready, and is, as it were, roaring thunder for the shattering of the formidable army of Samsāra with its six divisions,³ such a man knows that the triumphant and heroic son of Bhairavī⁴ of Victory is unconquerable in the three worlds solely by virtue of his possession of the Supreme Weapon⁵ of devotion to Guru. He alone who is ready to pass through that ordeal of burning fire knows that "the word of Guru is true and everything else is false". The Śāstra says: "If the Guru gives a command which is even contrary to the Tantra Śāstra, that command must be considered approved of by the Veda like the words of Mahārudra."⁶

When all earthly means fail: when Śāstra shrinks back and Śāstra⁷ is robbed of its power; when even the Devatā, with uplifted hand to bless, checks Her indomitable will and stands back; when in that terrible and pitiless great cremation ground,⁸ where horrors do a frantic dance, there is, despite the presence of the all-good Mother, nothing in all the infinite world which for our safety we can call our own; in that deep darkness of a new-moon night, haunted with destructive Bhairavas, Vetālas, Siddhas, Bhūtas, Vaṭukas, and Dākinīs⁹; when even the fire of

¹ Calling upon Siddhi to come to the Sādhaka.

² Uttāla.

³ Six enemies or sins—lust (Kāma), anger (Krodha), greed (Lobha), delusion (Moha), pride (Mada), envy (Mātsarya), which are here compared to the six divisions of the army, the Samsāra, which is to be conquered.

⁴ The Devī, as spouse of Śiva the formidable (Bhairava).

⁵ Brahmāstra.

⁶ Śiva.

⁷ There is here a play on the words Śāstra and Śāstra: the first meaning Scripture, and the second arms, or here religious rites, by which the spiritual combat is won.

⁸ Śmaśāna, where corpses are burnt.

⁹ Various terrible entities which haunt the Śāstra.

the Sādhaka's austere Tapas¹ is dimmed, and the firm and heroic heart of even the great Vīra² shakes with fear; when even the intricate bonds of the Sādhaka's posture,³ on the back of the corpse which is awakened by Mantra, is loosened⁴; when with a fainting heart the Vīra² feels as he sits the earth quake furiously under him; when without means of rescue he is about to fall and be crushed; when he is overtaken by the swoon of death—if even at such times the Sādhaka but freely and with full confidence opens his heart but once, and extends his uplifted hands, saying, "Save me, I pray thee, O Gurudeva!" then the Mother of the world, who is Herself the Guru, at once forgets all his faults, dispels all his difficulties with Her glance, and stretching forth ten hands instead of two, says: "Come, my child, there is no more fear," and blesses the Sādhaka by raising him to Her assuring bosom. On that day the Sādhaka also puts to its final test the question whether Guru is greater or the Mother is greater.⁵

Hence I say, O brother Sādhaka! when will that day come to you, the day on which the Guru will merge in the Mother's self,⁶ and you will be beside yourself in that maddening joy which is born of that union? O All-Merciful Mother! turn for once Thy merciful glance, brighten for once the fire⁷ in the heart of the Sādhakas of Thy beloved Bhārata,⁸ and grant full success to the Sādhana of Thyself as son by appearing before him as his Guru in Thy aspect as Father and in Thy aspect as Mother, so that as servants bound to Thee by that grace of Thine we may dance with joy and sing:

"None beseeches Thee, O Śyāma! Thyself fulfillest Thy own desire. Thou weepst also just as Thou laughest in the intoxication of Thy happiness."

There is, however, a class of inquirers into Śāstra who encourage themselves with the notion that they will set their minds to Siddhi and Sādhana in old age, after their intellect has been matured by knowing, hearing, and assimilating the views of all Scriptures. From the energy which these people display it would seem as if great men, such as Mārkaṇḍeya, Dadhīchi,⁹ Balirāja,¹⁰ and Bhīṣmadeva,¹¹ who enjoy eternal

¹ Devotion, austerity, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

² Literally, "Hero"; here one who follows the Tāntrik Virācāra.

³ Padmāsana, or "lotus-seat," on the back of the corpse on which his Sādhana is done.

⁴ From fear, or due to the moving of the corpse through force of the Mantra.

⁵ This idle question will be solved in the realization of their unity.

⁶ Svarūpa.

⁷ Tejas.

⁸ India.

⁹ Munis.

¹⁰ Prahlāda's grandson, for whom the Vāmana avatāra took place.

life, belong to their community, and that death finds no place in their nativity.¹ It is with an eye to this class that poets have said: "It is only ignorant boors² who think that they will bathe when there are no longer waves in the sea."

And for this reason Bhagavān has, in the discourse between the Deva and the Devī in the Kulārṇava Tantra, said: "If Ātmā itself does not keep Ātmā from injury, then where in the world is the benefactor who can deliver Ātmā from this sea of Samsāra? (1) He who in this world does not undergo treatment for that disease which leads to hell, what will he do when with such disease he goes to the next world, in which there is no medicine? (2) The supreme truth should be sought so long as this body exists. Who is there so perverse as to commence the excavation of a well with a view to extinguish a fire which has already caught his house? (3) Like a tigress, old age³ waits with open mouth to swallow the Jīva. As water continually exudes from a broken vessel, so is the period of life being constantly shortened. Diseases constantly inflict wounds like enemies laying siege to a house. Hence one should as early as possible engage in the working of good to oneself⁴ (4). Good work should be done what time there is no sorrow or danger, and when the senses are not disabled (5). Time passes in various occupations, but the Jīva knows it not. Happiness and sorrow born of the Samsāra kill the Jīva, but even then he does not know the path of the welfare of Ātmā (6). How many Jīvas are born, fall into dangers, become subject to suffering and sorrow, and die? Even the sight of such does not enlighten the Jīva, maddened as he is by drinking the wine of delusion as to what is his own good (7). Prosperity is like a dream, youth is shortlived like a flower, and life passes like a flash of lightning. How can a man feel satisfied who has seen all this? (8) The utmost period of a man's life is a hundred years. Half of it is passed in sleep, and the remaining half also is made useless to him by childhood, disease, old age, sorrow, and other such causes (9). Utterly indifferent to the work which ought by all means to be begun, sleeping during the time he should be awake, and fancying danger where there should be firm faith—alas! by what ill-fortune is man in this fashion destroyed? (10) How can Jīva, cherishing the fleeting Samsāra so dear to him, live without fear in this body as evanescent as a bubble of water, and which endures as little as the stay of a bird on the branch of a tree? (11) He seeks benefit from things which

¹ The celestial combinations which are cast upon the horoscope.

² Varvaras: ignorant, rustic. The term "barbarian" comes from this root.

³ Jarā (feminine).

⁴ That is, of course, not in the selfish sense, but in the sense of good which

do him injury, thinks the impermanent to be permanent, sees his highest good in that which is evil, and yet does he not see that death is coming upon him? (12) O Devī! deluded by the great Māyā, the Jīva sees and yet sees not, hears and yet understands not, reads and yet knows not (13). The whole of this world is at each moment sinking in the deep sea of time,¹ infested with the great alligators of death and disease (14)."

Great is the power of those to make Providence² laugh who hope to be initiated after they have without aid heard and understood, and become learned in that which baffles understanding even when understood. To hope to get initiated after having studied philosophy, logic, Veda and Vedānta, is even more dangerous.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra Bhagavān has said: "Fools bound by the bonds of Paśuhood³ fall into the deep well of the six systems of philosophy, and fail to know what is their highest good⁴ (1). Through ignorance of the meaning of the Vedas wrong-headed disputants ever wander about scorched by the fire of doubt, knowing not that, driven by the waves of time, they live within the fearful jaws of death (2). The words of a paṇḍit who is well versed in Veda, Āgama, and Purāṇa, but has no knowledge of the highest good,⁴ is for others a mere infliction. Know his words to be like the croak of a crow.⁵ (The nature of the cawing of a crow indicates good or bad to men, but the crow itself is ignorant of this.)⁶ (3). Oppressed by such thoughts as what is knowledge and what is knowable, they read Śāstras day and night. But, O Devī! they for ever remain ignorant of the supreme truth⁷ (4). Many there are who acquire in the world a reputation for poetry and rhetoric, but the inner life of those fools whose senses are without repose is full of care and sorrow (5). The highest good⁸ is one thing, but Jīvas ever strive to picture it as something else. The purpose of the Śāstra is one thing, but they explain it as another. They explain with perplexed minds, but do not themselves understand what they explain. There are some who, without instructions from a Guru, but smitten by vanity, read the Vedas and other Śāstras; but those who are possessed of the knowledge of their true meaning are very rare. As a ladle does not know the taste of the

¹ Kāla, which is not translated as death, because death occurs below.

² Vidhātā, the Dispenser.

³ The Tāmasa state of a Paśu (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Paramārtha.

⁵ Which may or may not be auspicious.

⁶ Good or bad fortune, may be indicated by the sounds of animals. Such a paṇḍit may do good or bad without knowing it. The parenthesis is the author's.

liquid which it serves to stir, and as the head carries flowers,¹ but their fragrance is smelt by the nose, so while these people read the Śāstras, the truth they reveal is known by good Śādhakas only. Much labour do they give in the study of the Śāstras, but the result of such study is mere dispute between themselves (6-9). The foolish Jīva sees not the spirit² within himself, but is deluded into studying Śāstra like the silly herdsman who, carrying the goat under his arm, yet thinks he sees it in the shadow which it casts in the water of a well (10). Mere verbal knowledge³ of Śāstras can never destroy the happiness and sorrow which arises from the world of sense any more than the rays of light of a pictured lamp can remove the darkness of a room (11). Study of Śāstras by unenlightened⁴ men is like seeing by blind men (a parting of the eyelids only).⁵ O Devī! to those only who are enlightened are Śāstras the source of spiritual knowledge (12). Some people stand in front, others at the back, some on the left, and others on the right of the place where the truth is, and quarrel between themselves, saying that the truth is of this kind, or of that kind, or of that other kind, and so forth. Even⁶ in the case of a man famous by reason of his education, charity, heroism, and other qualities, but who is absent, some people say that he is of this kind, some others that he is of that kind, and so forth: thus picturing him in various ways.⁵ (In fact, all will admit that the Spirit is far from those who dispute whether It is of this kind or that) (13-14).⁵ None has direct knowledge, though there are some who have knowledge derived from report (that is, to-day men possess that scholastic knowledge which enables them to argue with one another as regards the various paths spoken of in the Śāstra. They refrain, however, from performing Sādhana, which will give them direct and immediate knowledge).⁵ O Beloved One! there is no doubt that those who as regards Śāstra move in the dark are indeed far away from its fundamental truths⁷ (15). Men desire to know from all Śāstras what is knowledge and what is knowable. But, O Devī! the Jīva does not realize that one cannot reach the end of Śāstras even if one were to spend in the pursuit a life of a thousand years, much less can they do so in a life of a hundred years (16). The Vedas and other Śāstras are many, but life is very short. Moreover, in this life there are

¹ As women and others do, or as the Brāhmaṇa in Pūjā puts flowers in his tied Śikhā.

² Tattva.

³ That is, knowledge of the letter and not of the spirit.

⁴ Prajñāhīna.

⁵ Author's parenthesis.

⁶ That is, the people may forget the qualities of an ordinary man, but even in the case of a famous one there is dispute, etc.

millions of hindrances. Therefore, one should acquire only the essence of all Śāstras just as a duck takes the milk out of water with which it has been mixed¹ (17). An intelligent man should, after studying all Śāstras, and after acquisition of knowledge of their essential principles,² abandon them all just as one who collects paddy throws away the husk and straw. As he who has been satisfied by a drink of nectar no longer cares for food, so one who has known the Spirit³ has no longer need of the Śāstras (18). O Lady adored of Viras⁴! liberation comes from knowledge alone; liberation cannot be had from anything else, neither from a study of the Vedas nor from reading of the Śāstras. Neither the Vedas nor the philosophies are causes of liberation. Similarly, no Śāstra is such cause. Knowledge alone is the cause of liberation. All other branches of knowledge⁵ are (for this purpose) fruitless. Better is it to bear even a single life-inspiring⁶ great Mantra taught by Guru than the load of lifeless⁷ blocks of wood which are various forms of worldly knowledge⁸ (21). Only from the mouth of Guru can a Jīva learn the one immutable⁹ Brahman¹⁰ which has been taught by Śiva Himself. Such knowledge cannot be attained through the study of even ten million Śāstras" (22).

The Śāstra not only speaks of the necessity of testing the Guru, but also of the need to carefully test the Śiṣya.¹¹ Before initiation a Śiṣya should live in his Guru's house for one, two, three, or four years, according to his caste. During these periods the Guru will test the reality of his devotion to Guru and Devatā by constantly giving hard commands. Nothing concerning the Śiṣya's body, mind, and speech should remain unknown to the Guru. During these years of residence with their tests the Guru will learn all about the Śiṣya's whole life. He will test him to see whether after Śāstrik initiation the Śiṣya will continue in the path of Śādhana as ordained in the Śāstra. We do not know how many Śiṣyas exist to-day who are ready to undergo these tests, or how many are even aware of them, nor can we say how many Gurus are capable of holding such a test. It appears from the practice prevailing in these days that Gurus and Śiṣyas have made a private agreement between themselves to absolve each other of the responsibility of such mutual tests. In consequence of this compact, the race of Gurus is to-day being exterminated, and the Śiṣyas, who should

¹ It is able to sip the milk and leave the water, notwithstanding the two are together.

² Tattva-padārtha.

³ Tattva.

⁴ See *ante*.

⁵ Vidyā.

⁶ Sanjivana.

⁷ Literally, "unconscious".

⁸ Laukika Vidyā.

⁹ That is, the Brahman is Niṣkriya (activeless), Prakṛti is Sakriya (with action). Where there is non-duality there is no action.

properly be the ruled, are becoming the rulers. Bhagavān, the Creator of all things, has also in the Tantra Śāstra ordained rules for the testing of the Śiṣya, and has spoken as follows of the consequence of their violation:

In the Navaratneśvara it is said: "A Guru acquires fitness to give initiation and a Śiṣya to receive it, if they live together for one year."

In the Sārasaṅgraha it is said: "A good Guru will test the Śiṣya under his care for one year." This test is for a Brāhmaṇa Śiṣya only. In the case of Śiṣyas belonging to the Kṣatriya and other non-Brāhmaṇik castes, the test is to be extended over gradually lengthening periods.

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: "Fitness to receive initiation is acquired by a Brāhmaṇa in one year, by a Kṣatriya in two years, by a Vaiśya in three years, and by a Śūdra in four years, after their devotion to Guru has been during such period tested."

In the Kulārṇava and other Tantras it is said: "If a Guru initiates one who is unworthy through desire for wealth or through fear, greed, or the like, then the curse of Devatā will fall on that Guru, and the initiation given by him will be fruitless.

"It is useless to give initiation to one who is the Śiṣya of another, or who belongs to a bad family, or is a knavish, cunning, fraudulent man,¹ or who is vain of his learning, or who is disliked by his wife,² or who has passed the proper time for initiation, or has any physical defect."

"He who gives initiation improperly, and he who receives it improperly, both the giver and receiver are cursed by the Devī. Without initiation according to the proper method and worship of the lotus-feet of Guru, the Śiṣya will but meet poverty and the Devī's curse in this world."

"A Guru should first test a Śiṣya according to the rules of Śāstra for the working out of the latter's Bhoga³ and Mokṣa,⁴ and then give him instruction in Mantra, otherwise the initiation will be in vain. If through delusion both the Guru and Śiṣya give and receive instruction respectively in Mantra without mutually testing the fitness of one another, then both are doomed to the state of a Piśāca.⁵ Both he who gives instruction contrary to the Śāstra, and he who receives it will, together with twenty-one generations above him, go to a terrible hell."

¹ Dhūrta.

² Strīdviṣṭa. In rites the help of the wife is required, and nothing of use is achieved where there is lack of marital harmony. Moreover, his wife to the Śiṣya should be his house goddess (gṛha devatā), and it is his duty to please her.

³ Enjoyment and suffering.

⁴ Liberation.

“If a foolish Guru gives instruction to one who is unpurified,¹ then all his Mantras are destroyed—that is to say, their potency is lost, just as when paddy-seeds are sown in sandy soil their power to germinate is gone. As the minister’s sin affects the King, or that of a wife the husband, so a sin committed by a Śiṣya affects the Guru.”²

In the Rudrayāmala it is said: “A Guru should forsake a Śiṣya who is ever addicted to vice, lustful,³ given over to other passions,⁴ of wicked mind,⁵ and evil repute, untruthful, lacking in due humility,⁶ wanting in knowledge, wisdom, and dull of intellect, neglectful of Vaidik duty and of the Ācāra⁷ of his Āśrama,⁸ irreverent, impatient, wrathful, adulterous, of evil mind and thought, without devotion, weak-minded, wicked, truthless, who does Sādhana with a heart unpurified, full of the defects of the Kali age, and spoken ill of by all. O Vira!⁹ if a Guru, through hope of wealth or the like, does not abandon such a Śiṣya, then that sinful Guru (more guilty than the Śiṣya) will, as well as the Śiṣya, be doomed to hell. The load of sins earned by that Śiṣya will, in a moment, destroy the Guru’s Siddhi, and at once throw him into hell for the undoing of all his deeds. Hence let a Guru take Śiṣyas after careful discrimination according to the rules prescribed in the Śāstra, otherwise he will be doomed to hell for his Śiṣya’s faults.”

THE TIME FOR INITIATION

We nowadays find many reputed families of even the Brāhmaṇa caste, not to speak of Kṣātriya and other castes whose members, though in no way under the influence of atheistic¹⁰ principles, and having faith and reliance in Dharma,¹¹ are yet under the impression that the command of the Śāstra in the matter of initiation is properly obeyed if a person is initiated some day or other of his life, no matter how old he may then be. It is a matter of even greater regret that their Guru families labour under the same error. The cause of this is to be found in the Guru profession of the Guru families which we have described. However that may be, it is admitted on all hands that initiation is necessary for the purpose of Sādhana, and that its effect is Siddhi. Sādhana is performed with the co-operation of the threefold means of body, speech, and mind. When

¹ Asamskrta. One who has not received the Samskāras.

² The Guru will have to suffer for the Śiṣya’s sin.

³ Kāmuka.

⁴ Kāmādipriya.

⁵ Kuṭīla, a designing man.

⁶ Avinīta.

⁷ Ācāra from the root *car* (to do)—that is, acts, habits, practice. Evil practices are Anācāra.

⁸ Stage of life (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁹ See *ante*.

bodily functions have been fully developed and begun to show themselves in the spring shoots, it is then that the wind of the spring of initiation has begun to blow. It is to such persons as are not initiated at this time that the Śāstra refers when it speaks of persons who have "passed the proper time for initiation" in the above quoted passage, setting forth the character of prohibited Śiṣyas.¹ The proper time for initiation is the age of sixteen. The words of Devī to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Rādhā Tantra are as follows:

"One should receive initiation with devotion on the attainment of the age of sixteen. My Son! for one who has not received initiation at that age, even the Samskāra ² of taking the name of Hari is fruitless. (It is impossible to fully perform Sādhana after the expiry of the time for Sādhana, and a Mantra which has not been matured by Sādhana does not bear fruit.³) One should, therefore, take care to receive initiation at the age of sixteen, otherwise everything which is done is counted but as the work of a Paśu."

For this reason Bhagavān Maheśvara has said: "O Mother of the three worlds! whoever after having travelled through eighty-four lakhs ⁴ of births has received the rare human form, yet fails to worship Thee, is like a man who rises to the top of a flight of stairs, and then falls down again." If a man falls from one of the middle or lower steps of the staircase, he probably is wounded; or if he falls from one of the higher steps, he is likely to be killed; but if he falls from the highest point of the staircase, he cannot escape from being crushed and ground to dust. Similarly, if one falls after attaining human birth and Brāhmaṇahood, which is rarer still, there is no easy escape for him.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: "What wonder, O Devī! that this earthly body should be destroyed by the power of Him by whose power the earth is consumed, the Sumeru ⁵ is rent, and the Sea is dried up (1). We speak of 'My son,' 'My wife,' 'My wealth,' 'My friend,' but before one has got over this sort of senseless talk death seizes the body like a tiger (2). Death seizes a man while he is still engaged in doing this thing or that thing, or thinking that he will have to do this thing or that thing (3). An intelligent man will do to-day the work of tomorrow, and in the forenoon the work of the afternoon, for death does not wait for the finishing or unfinishing of any work (4). Does not Jīva see approaching him before his eyes Death's terrible army of diseases, guided by Old Age, and with orders from Death himself? (5). Death eats man after piercing him with the spit of thirst (desire), smearing him with the Ghee of mundane objects,⁶ and roasting him in the fire of

¹ See *ante*.

² "Sacrament". ³ Author's parenthesis.

attachment and dislike (6). Death brings all under his rule, both boy or youth, old man or child in the womb. The visible world thus remains subject to death (7). Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas, and all classes of beings, move towards their own destruction (disappearance).¹ A Jīva should, therefore, be prompt in doing with all his heart such things as are calculated to benefit him in this world and hereafter (8)."

To him who has faith in such direct statements of the Śāstra, and has eyes to see the transiency, under natural law, of the physical body, which is but a bubble in the visible world of Jīvas, even the sovereignty of the vast Universe is as worthless as a blade of grass when compared with the value of even half a second of human existence. We know not to what benighted region we shall have to travel, according to our own Karma, after the dissolution of this present body. Even Devas pray to be born in Bhārata-varṣa,² that they may be there liberated by birth in a precious human body after forsaking all its enjoyments. This is that Bhāratavarṣa, the Āryāvarta,³ which is the field of liberation and which, as well as our human body has been attained, not by our effort, but by Her grace. If this time we lose these, who is so fortunate amongst us as to dare say that he will surely return to this Bhārata, this Āryāvarta, the land which it is hard for even Devas to attain? Who, too, will dare to say that he will also regain this human state and this Brāhmanism? Who can say to what unseen region this vaporous cloud will be blown by the wind of some unknown fate⁴? Hence, while there is yet time and the sun shines, the Mother's son must cease playing, and seek to go to the Mother. He must take refuge with all his heart at the feet of Guru, that he may find the path in this deep darkness, making himself, according to the command of the Śāstra, the meanest servant of the Guru, in order that he may become an object of his mercy.

The Śāstra itself, the seat of infinite mercy, has specified the characteristics which a Śiṣya must possess in order that the desire-fulfilling creeper⁵ of Guru's grace, may bear fruit.

For instance, it is said in the Gautamīya Tantra: "Born in a noble family; of pure spirit; seeking that which is the necessity of Puruṣa (Puruṣārtha—the four-fold object of Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa⁶); learned in the Vedas; wise; devoted to the service of parents; knower of Dharma⁷ and a doer thereof; attached to the personal service of Guru;

¹ Author's parenthesis.

² India.

³ Āryāvarta is the western portion of Northern India. Bhāratavarṣa is all India, but now commonly used synonymously.

⁴ Adrṣṭa.

⁵ Kalpalatā.

⁶ Author's parenthesis—that is religion, wealth, desire and its fulfilment,

Śiṣya to think of him as a mere man. To know that there is no distinction between Iṣṭadevatā and Mantra, between Mantra and Guru, and between Guru and Ātmā. This, O Beloved! is the order in which devotion shows itself. He who disregards his Guru's words and performs prayer and worship¹ according to his own notions thereof will never attain Siddhi in either Japa² of Mantra or worship of Devatā. One should daily worship one's Guru according to the Śāstra by Japa or Mantras. The seat, bed, clothes, ornaments, shoes, shadow, and wife, and every other thing belonging to or connected with the Guru should be worshipped as though they were parts of the Guru himself.³ One should never walk across the Guru's bed, seat, shoes, umbrella, bathing-water, or shadow. At the sight of Guru one should be cheerful and full of great joy, but should regard his lotus-feet with awe and cautious eyes. There is not room enough in this book to quote even a hundredth part of all that is ordained in the Śāstra as to the duties of a Śiṣya towards his Guru. It will, therefore, be useless to go further into that point here. The very fact that in the Śāstra Guru has been spoken of "as Śiva Himself in visible form," thus giving to even the Iṣṭadevatā a secondary position, will of itself enable intelligent Sādhakas to understand what are a Śiṣya's duties towards that most worshipful Supreme Devatā.

¹ Upāsanā.

² "Recitation" (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

³ Literally, "as his Vibhūti"—that is, as belonging to or connected with him; something of him may be said to be in them.

CHAPTER XV

WORSHIP IN GENERAL¹

PŪJĀ²

MANY people nowadays in a community which lays claim to great wisdom believe that image-worship was introduced and is maintained in the Ārya Society for those only who are very weak—that is, those who belong to a very low order of spirituality. We have little leisure to devote our attention to the words of such men as discuss these matters from the outside, just as a non-Ārya look at the Durgā-pūjā festival in an Ārya house from the courtyard outside the Caṇḍimaṇḍapa.³ We are servants of the Śāstra, and as such are bound to preach what the Śāstra has clearly established. We shall therefore now see what Pūjā (worship) is according to the Śāstra. It is a matter of great regret that even amongst preachers of Śāstrik principles there are many who are under the impression that “worship of the Deity with form⁴ or image-worship⁵ is only a means of producing steadiness of mind.⁶ They opine, therefore, that for him who has acquired such steadiness there is no longer any necessity of worship of the Deity with form or image-worship. According to this argument we must suppose that there is an arrangement between the Devatā appearing with form or present in an image and the worshipper by which the latter’s connection with the former endures only so long as his mind is not steadied, and that when it is so the Devatā ceases to exist for him. At the commencement and end of the worship of the Deity with form⁷ the Sādhaka forgets himself and offers at His feet everything which he calls ‘My’ or ‘I’.” As regards this worship Bhagavān Himself, the Creator of all things, has in the Kulārṇava Tantra said

¹ Sādhāraṇa-upāsanātattva.

² Pūjā is ceremonial worship with articles of worship (upacāra), generally before images. Upāsanā has a wider signification, being worship in its widest sense, including spiritual practices of all kinds, whilst the Sādhaka is in the realm of dualism.

³ Place in the house in which worship of images is performed.

⁴ Sākāra upāsanā.

⁵ Mūrti pūjā; Mūrti (form or appearance).

lotus of his heart this form¹ of mine, beneficial in meditation—namely, a form full-limbed, calm, of beautiful features, with four long² and beautiful arms; a graceful neck and a fair forehead; with divine and gracious smile; decked with brilliant ear-ornaments³ in his two well-shaped ears; dressed in yellow or deep blue; brilliant with the beauty of the Śrīvatsa mark⁴; bearing a conch shell, a discus, a club, and a lotus in his four hands, and a garland of wild flowers on the breast; with lotus-feet shining with the lustre of bejewelled anklets⁵; illumined with the light of the Kaustubha gem; ornamented with shining crown, bracelets, waist-chain, and armlets; beauteous in all limbs, pleasant; his countenance sweet with grace, with tender eyes and form fair to look upon. He will meditate on this pleasing Brahmā-form by fixing his mind on all its limbs. Drawing his senses, such as sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell from their objects by means of his mind,⁶ and with the aid of Buddhi,⁷ the charioteer, the Sādhaka will bathe his mind completely in the waters of love for Me. After that he will draw that mental vision⁸ hitherto spread over all my limbs to one place and hold it there. It will not then be necessary for the Sādhaka to think of anything else.⁹ He will only meditate upon My countenance, on which plays a soft and sweet smile. When the mind can uninterruptedly and without distraction contemplate that countenance, he will withdraw his single-pointed mind and fix it in the ether.¹⁰ Then, after perceiving My (aforesaid) subtle manifestations¹¹ in ether, in the mansions,¹² or in the whole of the infinite ether, he will draw his mental faculty, which has had the entire ether as its object, and again rest it in Me as the Paramātmā. Then it will not be necessary to meditate on anything.¹³ The Yogī, thus in Samādhi,¹⁴ will see me as the Paramātmā of all Jīvas as his own Ātmā; as one light mingled with another, and not different from it. In a Yogī, who has thus by intense meditation attained Samādhi,¹⁵ the three forms of error¹⁶—namely, object of knowing, and action¹⁷—will soon be subdued.”

A Sādhaka will here understand that Upāsana¹⁸ exists only so long as Dhyāna¹³ exists. In the next stage, which is Samādhi or Nirvāṇa, the

¹ Rūpa.

² Long arms are a sign of strength.

³ Makaras and Kuṇḍalas, ornaments of the ear.

⁴ A lock of hair on the breast of Viṣṇu

⁵ Nūpurās.

⁶ Manas.

⁷ Intellect

⁸ Cittavṛtti.

⁹ Previously the mind has been thinking of various attributes of the Devatā—His person, dress' adornments, and so forth; now it simply gazes on His countenance.

¹⁰ Vyoma.

¹¹ Vibhūtiś.

¹² Kakṣa—thus a solar system would be such.

¹³ For the mind and all else now become one with the Paramātmā.

¹⁴ Ecstasy, or the fourth Turvita state.

mental faculty¹ is lost in the womb of Prakṛti. The Yogī, who has thus lost his mind,² forgets even the Jīvātmā as something separate from the Paramātmā. Who, then, is it who perceives the incorporeal aspect in the one and only substance of consciousness at the time when even the sense "I exist" is lost, when the senses, mind, and even the "I," do not exist? It is indeed difficult to solve this problem. We call this state not "seeing the incorporeal," but Videha-Kaivalya.³ We may admire the energy of those who in the hope of their becoming incorporeal in the circumstances described above, invoke the incorporeal, and see shapeless dreams for a hundred births: but to such we would also say that there is no need to try to make arrangements to become incorporeal, for He who will one day make this entire corporeal universe incorporeal will not bide long to make either you or me incorporeal when the occasion for doing so arises. But know it for certain, that so long as the Deity with form does not appear before you, not even the Devatā without form can dissolve your own bodily form and give you Kaivalya.⁴ So much about meditation, concentration, and trance.⁵

Next comes the process of Pūjā.⁶ We have more than once shown that there can be no Upāsana⁶ of anything incorporeal. Now, what is image-worship?⁷ We must also see whether image-worshippers are really fools of a low order of spirituality who are led by blind faith. We cannot call that a criticism of image-worship which comes from those who have no inner knowledge of the subject. Rather it is a criticism of what they understand to be image-worship; for Pūjā and so forth are things of the Śāstra, which lays down the mode of Pūjā, and the person competent to perform Pūjā is a Sādhaka. On the other hand, the critic's criticism is contrary to what the Śāstra and Sādhaka say—"It is Sādhana and Siddhi," say the Śāstra and Sādhaka. "It is play and amusement," says the critic. Now, in this conflict of views how can we disbelieve the word of those who by their practice have intimate knowledge of the matter, and believe those who have nothing to do with Śāstra, Sādhana, or Siddhi? Image-worship is not to be understood from outside. Only the worshipper understands it. The critic, therefore, is nothing but a critic of his own intelligence and education. One who does Pūjā and one who merely observes it are not, surely, the same thing. One who looks at a sweet-shop can tell us the shape, colour, and quantity of the sweets there, as also whether they are hot or cold to the touch; but

¹ Manovṛtti.

² Manas.

³ Bodiless Kaivalya—that is, Kaivalya in which all trammels of body or limitation disappear, or full liberation.

⁴ Because in such a case the worship is of no avail.

can he tell us whether their taste is sweet or bitter, sour or pungent? Howsoever clever a man may be, he only can tell us thereof who has tasted them with his tongue. Again, one who himself knows the taste of a sweet can never, despite his personal knowledge, make another who has never tasted it realize its taste even by the use of a thousand forms of speech or other device. Similarly, how can a man without faith know that supersensual truth which a capable Sādhaka realizes when he establishes a Devatā's life in his image by the powerful potency¹ of Mantra? The Śāstra has nowhere said that one may as one wishes perceive the presence of Devatā in the street, market, or at the bathing ghāt² just as one desires. It has said, if such and such things are done, such and such things will happen. Now I ask, How much of those things have you and I done? The Śāstra has said that it is only when a Sādhaka has long served his Guru, after having been tested and initiated by him in accordance with Śāstra, and when he has fully understood the principles of Sādhana and become able to awaken the potency³ of Mantra through the preliminary Śāstrik rites, that he becomes competent to cause by means of that Mantra the appearance of the conscious Devatā in Yantras, images, and so forth, made of such unconscious substances as earth, stone, and the like. Now, brother critic, tell me truly in the name of Dharma, opening for once the door of your heart, what have you done of all this? At the outset you are deeply suspicious, a great unbeliever. You have not the right even to serve Guru or receive initiation, not to speak of performing Sādhana and worship,⁴ yet such as you are you proceed to criticize the worship of Devatā in images, which can only be done by competent Sādhakas, who have knowledge of super-worldly truths.⁵ What can be greater impudence on your part than this? Unfortunately, in this land of madmen there is none to call a madman mad, and so, O brother critic! fortunately for you there is none to criticize you. But do not for this reason think to-day that the earth is the capital of mad men only.

The subtle criticism of critics and the goodness of Dayānanda's⁶ party have nowadays given birth to a few new words, such as image-worship,⁷ doll worship,⁸ and so forth. In consequence of the wide currency which

¹ Śakti.

² The steps leading down to the river or other water down which those who go to the bath, etc., descend.

³ Śakti.

⁴ Bhajana.

⁵ Tattva.

⁶ Founder of the "reformed" Hinduism known as the Ārya Samāj.

⁷ Pratimāpūjā, or mūr̥ti-pūjā.

has been given to such language by the community of unbelievers, many senseless Hindus, both illiterate and literate, now take pride in publicly calling themselves image-worshippers or idolaters. Perhaps they think that these words are approved of the Śāstra. But how regrettable is this when we consider that such words cannot issue from the mouth of a man, the son of Manu, unless he has been born in a non-Ārya family with a non-Ārya disposition. The words when we consider them reveal a mine of profound infidelity.¹ Many authors write, "The practice of worshipping images has been prevalent in the Ārya community from ancient times." One might suppose from this that we had merely to do with the worship of images without reference to Mantra, Devatā, or Sādhana. Others, fond of far-fetched meanings, say that image-worship is like the modern practice of showing respect and honour to the lifeless statues raised in memory of lamented deceased persons; just as if Devatās were all dead, and we (shameless men who have no faith in the next world and yet call ourselves Ārya) were showing our gratitude to them before their images. Alas! O Bhagavān! when will the eyes of this class of born-blind educated fools be opened? When will we be saved from all such interpretations? How long will this generation of Ghaṭotkachas,² sprung from the seed of Bhīma in the womb of Hiḍimbā, last? Half-castes are governed by the Dharma³ of their mothers, therefore is it Bhārata's ill-fortune that so-called religious principles⁴ propounded in the nineteenth century vomit only infidelity. But the matter does not rest even here. For is it not said that Āryas who worship the Deity with form are idolaters,⁵ that idolatry is their Dharma, or, in other words, that those who worship the Deity with form worship idols, images of Devatās being those idols; that worship of the Devata with form is like the play of ignorant children with dolls, and that those who perform such worship are as ignorant as such children. O critic! you consider yourself to be a wise man. Will you tell me that those Sādhakas, crest-gems of the race of the wise, worshippers of the Devatā with form, were ignorant fools—men who produced⁶ the Vedas, Tantras, Purāṇas, systems of Philosophy, Astronomy, Āyurveda⁷ and Dhanurveda?⁸ Why! it is the partaking by you of the mere leavings

¹ Nāstikatā. Because it is not the pratimā or the mūrti, still less a doll, which is worshipped, but the Devatā in the heart, which in the prāṇapratiṣṭhā rite is transferred to the image and worshipped.

² Demon Rākṣasa, son of Bhīma (one of the Pāṇḍavas), and Hiḍimbā, a Rākṣasī.

³ Law.

⁴ Ādhyātmika tattva.

⁵ Puttalikā.

⁶ That is, in the sense that the Scriptures are revealed to, and through, and spoken by the Ṛsis, who arranged them. In the higher sense the Veda is anauruseva—that is, without author.

of their food in the pages of books which makes you so proud of your knowledge and wisdom.¹ Is it not to invite death for insects like you and I to attempt to-day to leap across that sky-kissing untraversable mass of light,² which they with all the profundity of their knowledge, philosophy, and science took this worship to be? Hari! Hari! to call the most worshipful image of Devatā, the object of the Sādhaka's Sādhana an idol.³ To call the Yantra⁴ (in which presides the Devatā who is consciousness itself) unconscious and inert. And yet it is only because an indistinct shadow of that Devatā of consciousness is cast upon you that you believe your own body to be conscious! When as an ignorant little child you sleep you may easily think that you are devoid of consciousness. But will a grown-up child also (who can call and awaken you⁵) think so? To the Father or the Mother of the Universe you and I are similarly ignorant children, and hence to us His or Her image appears unconscious. But he who can call and awaken Him or Her—that is to say, he to whom Mother Kulakundalinī the Devī, who is eternal wakefulness, has given the power to call and awaken Her by awaking Herself in him—to him the true image of Her body can never appear unconscious for by the grace of Her who is consciousness he himself has been transformed into consciousness itself. You and I are unconscious⁶ ourselves and so to us Her image also appears unconscious. It is neither Her fault nor the fault of Her image. It is the fault of the Karma done by us in past lives.

A discussion is impossible on the subject of the diverse fruits of worship, for it is difficult to explain the character⁷ of fruits to a person who has no knowledge of the different kinds of taste. For this reason we shall endeavour to see by a consideration of the mode in which worship is done whether the community of Ārya Sādhakas—the worshippers of the corporeal,⁸ the worshippers of the Deity with form⁹—are ignorant fools of a low grade of spiritual competency or not.

According to the Śāstra it is the nature¹⁰ of Asuras¹¹ to be made dumb¹² with anger at the very mention of images of Devatā. A feeling of

¹ What these men have put in their books is regarded as their food. So great are they that the so-called critics are proud of a knowledge gained second-hand from the leavings of such food.

² Tejas.

³ Puttali.

⁴ Diagram (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁵ Author's parenthesis.

⁶ Jada; not, of course, wholly so, but in the sense that we do not possess true consciousness, which perceives the Brahman in all things.

⁷ Tattva.

⁸ Mūrtimayī.

⁹ Sākāra upāsana.

¹⁰ Dharma

enmity against Devatā can never arise in a person's mind unless there is an Asura disposition in his character and family. Again, without the appearance of such a feeling of enmity one is never liberated from the state of an Asura. Just as according to natural laws when fever is about to leave a man his body perspires, so when the time comes for liberation from the state of an Asura a feeling of enmity against Devatā is shown, for neither religious merit nor sin bears fruit in this world unless it grows enormous. Perhaps you think, "the image is not Devatā. Why, then, does this body of fools ¹ laugh or weep?" I ask, O prince of learned infidels! why, then, do you become angry at the mention of images of Devatā? It is true that an Asura becomes angry at the mention of the names of Devatā, but according to you an image is not Devatā. Why, then, do you become angry at the mere sight of it? Anger is a Vikāra ² as much as laughter and weeping are. It may be that the sight of a Devatā's image causes in you anger, a rājasa vikāra characteristic of a Dānava's state; while it causes in me joy, laughter, or tears of joy, Sāttvika vikāras ³ characteristic of manhood. Prakṛti, constituted of three Guṇas, is the Mistress of those Guṇas, and according to the proportions in which they occur in different persons She reveals different characteristics in them. If the sight of a Devatā's image had not produced any Vikāra in you,⁴ then you might one day say, "Why do these people laugh or weep?" But when you are wont to become angry at the sight of an image, you would do well to think that that which can make one person angry can also make another person laugh or weep—that in the unconscious image there is some such powerful consciousness as makes your eyes (which look upon all other persons and things with feelings of love, mercy, and brotherliness) red with a feeling of enmity. You, of course, do not believe that the image is the Devatā. But just consider that if the mere giving the image the name of Devatā can cause in you a Vikāra ⁵ so contrary to human feelings, what a great Vikāra of joy and felicity ought to be produced in those who see in that image the true light ⁶ of Devatā. With your physical eyes you see the worship of an image, but he who worships sees, with his superhuman vision, the full appearance of Her who is consciousness itself in that unconscious instrument,⁷ the image. During the period extending from the invocation of life ⁸

¹ That is, the author and those that think with him.

² Transformation of a thing from that which is its original nature.

³ That is, transformations due to the action of the Rajas and Sattva Guṇas respectively.

⁴ That is, had you yourselves been apathetic.

⁵ *Vide ante.*

⁶ Pratvakṣa ivotih.

⁷ Yantra.

until its final disposal¹ the earthen image is in the eyes of the Sādhaka, which have been cleared by the collyrium paint of Siddhi, consciousness itself.² It sheds the light, which is Brahman, of the beauty of the Mother of the Universe, the Brahmamayī, full of ever new charms.

This is the Sādhaka's point of view. But if you, without Sādhana and full of scepticism, know and really believe the image to be unconscious, then what a mean, hateful, cowardly disposition you show in becoming angry with it. Why become angry with a thing which you know is unconscious and without power? Why, like Asura Kamsa, do you proceed to break the image by dashing it against the ground?³ You want to grasp and dash against the ground that which even a Prince of Yogīs cannot keep confined in the temple of his heart!⁴ You want to destroy one whom Kamsa could not subdue!⁵ What can be a greater impudence on your part than this? With a frown at insignificant insects like you the Daughter of Nanda⁶ will return to the Vindhya mountain in order to destroy the conquerors of the three worlds, such as Śumbha and Niśumbha; but in order to crush your arrogance She will leave behind that manifestation⁷ of Hers,⁸ who descends in Nanda's house in Gokula for play⁹ in the world of men. Had not Kamsa believed that he would receive from the eighth child of Devakī⁸ the punishment he deserved for his sins, would he have proceeded to destroy her sons and daughters? This example makes us think that it is not that you do not believe in the divinity of images, but that it is in the fear of having to suffer the cruel torments of hell in repentance for your sins that you proceed to break them. This is the distinctive characteristic of your faith. From such fear you believe in images, but the pity of it is that, like the memory of an intoxicated man, this belief leaves you the moment you become blinded with a feeling of enmity. When under the influence of anger only you proceed to break them, you fail to realize whom you are going to break. O critic! none can break or make Her.

¹ Visarjana; the withdrawing of the mental image from the objective image, with the Samhāra (dissolution) Mudra when it is broken and thrown away. It must be disposed of as a dead body. The root Virjja = to abandon, to leave, to give up; and Visarjana is allowing the Deity invoked to go from the image at the conclusion of worship.

² As collyrium clears the eye, so Siddhi or success in worship enables the Sādhaka to see in the earthen image, Consciousness.

³ This Asura dashed the children of his sister Devakī on a stone, as he had been told that one of the children would be his destroyer.

⁴ So great is the Devatā that even great Yogīs cannot hold Her.

⁵ That is, Kṛṣṇa.

⁶ Devī as Yogamāyā incarnated as daughter of Nanda, who gave Her to Vasudeva in exchange for Kṛṣṇa, who was left with Nanda.

Whom do you want to frighten by breaking the outer image? We, too, break it after worship. May be that you dispose of it within your house while we dispose of it in water.¹ We dispose of the outer image outwardly and guard the inner image in our heart. The light of the image whose substance is consciousness, which we brought out from within us and attached to the image made of earth, we take back into ourselves after we have done with the worship of this earthen image. Nothing is thus broken and done altogether away with as in your case. As the outer temple² held the brilliance of a beauty filling the world, so also does the inner temple hold the grandeur of an incomparable beauty. Our Mother is without as She is within, and within as She is without. By my thus moving Her in thought from within to without and from without to within the door of my heart will become fully opened. On that day all invocation³ and final dismissal⁴ into and from the image will cease for ever. The day on which I shall see the inner image when looking at the outer image, and the latter when I look within, when it will be the same within as without—on that day the Mother will bring my own coming and going⁵ to an end, and the restless dancing Kālī⁶ will seat Herself and rest in peace; unless it be that the blissful Devī,⁷ finding the path open both within and without, runs from sheer joy hither and thither with even greater activity than before. But even if She does, I shall not on that day call or bring Her. In Her own joy She will come, go, dance, sing, and play of Her own accord. I shall only beat time and dance with Her, crying out, “Victory to Mother”. O brother critic! thou who art also the Mother’s son, by the Mother’s grace may you not be deprived of this joy. It is She whom you know as Mother within who graciously issues thereout by Her own power,⁸ and thus gratifies the Sādhaka. Of this power⁸ we shall give an account afterwards. Here we shall say this much, that it is a mistake to think that to an Ārya Sādhaka the want of an outer image means the want of an image within. On the contrary, it is because there is an image within that it has been revealed without. It is only after we have the inner image that we commence the outer worship. Even in the absence of an outer image the Sādhaka is able to carry out worship by means of the inner image.

In the Śrīmadbhāgavata Śāstra Bhagavān has said: “Images are of eight kinds—namely, of stone, wood, iron (metals),⁹ pastes¹⁰ of clay, and

¹ After worship the image is thrown into water, such as the sacred Ganges.

² Maṇḍapa.

³ Āvāhana, when the Goddess is called into the image.

⁴ Visarjana, see *ante*.

⁵ In the Samsāra.

⁶ Nṛtyakālī.

⁷ Ānandamayī.

⁸ Śakti.

⁹ Author’s parenthesis.

such other substances; made of jewels, painted; and mental." In the presence of any of the seven kinds of images made of stone and the like, the mental image should be first worshipped with mental articles of worship before worship is done of the outer image with material articles. But in the absence of any of those seven kinds of images, those who do external worship must bring from within themselves the inner image and worship it. It is in this connection that Rāmaprasāda,¹ the Prince of Sādhakas, has said: "Prasāda² says, 'My heart is a mould made of spotless lotuses. Mayest Thou dance after Thou hast been cast in that mould and made mental.'"³

In the Kulārṇava Tantra, the Lord of Devas has said: "O Great Devī! Sādhakas devoted to the Karmakāṇḍa⁴ by the combined force of Bhakti,⁵ and Mantra give form to Her who is above form⁶ and the supreme Śiva Himself; and worship Her between the sacred pit and the sacrificial ground,⁷ on winnowing fans (even now in many places Ārya women design images of Devatās on winnowing fans with vermillion, sandal and Durvā grass, Atap rice⁸ in Pūjās and Vratas of Maṅgalaçaṇḍī, Kulacaṇḍī,⁹ and many other Devatās)¹⁰; on walls (generally amongst Āryas in the north-west images of Devatās are painted on walls),¹⁰ in Pūjā, Vrata, and other religious rites¹¹; in Maṇḍalas¹² (Sarvatobhadra and other Maṇḍalas mentioned in the Śāstra),¹⁰ on slabs (metal, wood, or stone slabs),¹⁰ in the head¹³ and in the heart (1). Although the milk of a cow is produced from the blood which circulates through her whole body, it flows only from the teats of her udder; so, although the universe-pervading Devatā is present everywhere, Her true aspect¹⁴ is realized in images only (3). If an image be in all respects similar to the aspect of Devatā, as described in the Śāstra, if the articles of worship¹⁵ are collected with care, and if the Sādhaka has

¹ Rāmaprasāda Sen, the celebrated Bengali poet (born, 1718; died, 1775).

² That is, Rāmaprasāda.

³ That is, by being moulded in the heart of the Sādhaka.

⁴ The Scripture dealing with ritual.

⁵ Devotion.

⁶ Rūpātīta.

⁷ Sthaṇḍila.

⁸ There are two kinds of rice prepared from paddy. In the first the paddy is boiled and the husk is removed. In the other the husk is removed without such boiling by exposing the paddy to the sun. This is atap, and the other is called "siddha".

⁹ Devīs.

¹⁰ Author's parenthesis.

¹¹ As to Vratas, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

¹² A geometrical figure frequently drawn or made with various colours. The difference between a Maṇḍala and Yantra is that the former is used in the case of any Devatā, whereas a Yantra is appropriate to a specific Devatā only.

¹³ Brahmarandhra.

¹⁴ Svarūpa.

unswerving faith, then that Devatā is sure to enter that image (4). Cream so long as it remains in a cow's body does not nourish anyone, but for those who draw milk from the cow and collect the cream from it by their personal exertion in the way of boiling and so forth, that cream becomes a cause of physical nourishment. Just as in this way only the cream becomes a cause of physical nourishment, so, O Parameśvarī! the Devatā residing in the body of every person becomes the cause of the Sādhaka's liberation in consequence of worship only. Without such worship She does not grant the desired object to the Sādhaka (5-6). For this reason the Devatā should be worshipped by invoking into Her image Her life, senses, and everything else appertaining to Her, and by establishing them in such image with Tāntrik Mantras; otherwise, without such establishment of life,¹ the worship will be ineffectual (7). If the establishment of life in an image is performed according to the Śāstra, the worship will bear the great fruit of liberation, even if it be defective as regards other Mantras and rites.² Such defects will be cured by the Sādhaka's prayer to the Devatā for forgiveness (8). Karma³ done in violation of the rules laid down in the Śāstra will be wholly fruitless in consequence of the fault known as Karmabhanga⁴ (9). Karmas falling short of, or going beyond, the rules laid down in the Śāstra will never bear fruit. The fruits of all good Karmas³ performed according to the Śāstra will always be as visible as a fruit or other thing held in one's hand (10). Hence, in Japa, Homa, Pūjā⁵, and the like, Karma³ performed in strict conformance with Śāstrik rules will please the Devatā, and secure both the fruits of Bhoga and Mokṣa⁶ for the Sādhaka (11). O Spouse of Śambhu! futile is the worship and so forth done by those who do not know the nature⁷ of the Devatā, Yantras, and Mantraśakti⁸ (12). Yantras are all Mantra,⁹ and Devatā is the Śakti of Mantra itself. Therefore the Devatā is at once pleased if She is worshipped with Mantras according to the Śāstra (13). A Tantra is so called because it subdues (Nīyantraṇa) lust, anger, and other faults of Jīva and the sufferings caused thereby. This Yantra is a source of satisfaction to Devatā when She is worshipped in it (14). As the body is for a Jīva and as oil is for a lamp, so is Yantra the seat of eternal

¹ Prāṇapratiṣṭhā.

² That is, other than those relating to the Prāṇapratiṣṭhā rite.

³ Rites. ⁴ Violation of the order of worship.

⁵ "Repetition" of Mantra, the sacrifice into fire and ceremonial worship (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁶ Enjoyment and liberation.

⁷ Svarūpa.

⁸ Potency of Mantra.

play for all Devatās (15). Hence, the principal part ¹ of worship ² is to adore the Parameśvarī, after the making of and drawing of Her image and Yantra. But, O My Beloved! the worship should be performed according to the rules, and after the Sādhaka has received full instruction therein from Guru (16)."

Wherever Śāstra has spoken of images, it has in this way similarly referred to the Mantra and Devatā. It has also said: "In this way the Sādhaka, who has controlled his Prāṇa,³ should, having through meditation beheld his Iṣṭadevatā in his heart, contemplate upon the unity of the image of the Devī both within and without." The process for so doing will be described in its proper place later. Here only this much should be understood that it is the inner image which must be brought out and established in the outer image. Our critic will now consider whether it is not the height of folly to try to do away with worship of the Deity with form by breaking its image. Be the image, mental or material, we break it every day after worship. But in spite of so much breaking we cannot really break it for a single moment. Whenever or wherever I look, within or without, I ever see the Devī, whose substance is will, as Bhagavān or Bhagavati, in whatsoever form She is pleased to appear. I see my Mother, the mad,⁴ disordered girl, dancing with gentle movements of her body, now taking up the flute instead of the sword, or again seizing the sword instead of the flute, or yet again at times making both the sword and the flute into one in Her hand; mingling Her laughter with Her dancing; now loosening and now binding up Her hair. If I sleep, she awakens me by coming Herself and playing on the flute. If I commit any offence, She raises Her sword and, smiling gently, threatens me with it. What infidel ⁵ is there who can break this image? Who in the three worlds has the power to break the image to which my heart is bound with such a deep love? The outer image with which you are concerned is nothing but a reflection of the real one. So long as the inner image, which is thus reflected, is not broken, what will you gain by breaking its reflection? The fair and transparent moon is reflected in the clear bosom of a river. The light of its golden beauty is borne upon the innumerable ripples raised by the gentle stirrings of the evening wind. If like foolish children you and I proceed to strike at the reflection with our sticks, think you that

¹ Kalpa.

² Pūjā.

³ That is, his breath by Prāṇāyāma.

⁴ Pāglā, as already stated (see *ante*), the English word "mad" fails to convey the meaning of the word "pāglā," for in Bengali it is tinged with a feeling of tenderness, and persons so called are often greatly loved. The term denotes rather a person of eccentric and amiable character, and is akin to the Persian Dewānā.

we shall thereby break the moon itself? Mistaken as we are, the agitation of the water may lead us to think that the moon has been shattered into a hundred or a thousand fragments; but, O brother! wait but a moment, and you will see that when the water has again become calm the full moon shines as fully there as ever. Then you will understand that the moon which is agitated by the waves is only a reflection of and not the moon itself. The moon appears in the water because the rays of the moon in the heavens have reached it. O brother! you energetic child! the moon in the heavens will not be broken until the little arms of dwarfs such as you and I can reach through the firmament where the moonlight plays and touch the lunar orb itself. I therefore ask you, O brother! what is the use of striking at the reflection if you cannot touch that which it reflects? The external image which you see before a devotee is not merely such, nor is the image (which has risen in the sky of the devotee's heart) of Her who plays on the breast of Śiva and stirs in the hearts of devotees a mere outward thing. That image of Brahmayī, which is reflected in the river of the devotee's love-laden eye, shedding the light¹ of Brahman on the playful lucid waves of feeling; that image of Her who, though the one and only Īśvarī, is reflected in multiple innumerable waves in the eyes of countless devotees, is not a mere outward thing. Were anyone to break that inner image, it might become him to say one day: "I shall do away with the worship of the Deity with form by breaking Her image." If to-day you and I proceed to break an outer image with the cudgel of our own violent infidelity, do you think it will be really broken thereby? Never! If, however, the eye of the devotee is hurt, sweet tears of devotion will fall from them, the sight of which will stir the hearts of all men. But, then, instantly before your eyes the deep waters assume a calm, gentle, and tranquil aspect. The agitation of the water does not cause the moon's reflection to disappear. On the contrary, the clear moon-beams like garlands of light dance and play on every ripple. Similarly, your blow will not drive away the Devatā's image from the devotee's eyes. On the contrary, the great Śakti of the mental Devatā will play on every ripple in the water of the tears of the devotee's eye. But before your own eyes the consoling peace will shortly descend and calm the tears. Then instantly you will see that Brahmayī, who dwells in the hearts of devotees, has again fully appeared without; and then, seeing the displayed and fearful nature of Her gentle, sweet laughter in the presence of the devotee, and the vanity of our effort to break that image, it will seem to you as if the victorious queller of Mahiṣa² is to-day laughing peals of laughter after She crushed the pride of Dānavas under the toe of Her left foot and has bestowed the dominion of heaven³ on Devas. O Mother of the world!

let me see, O Mother! that day. By Thy kindness teach me that unbelief which causes Thee, O Mother (whom even Princes of Yogins seldom attain in meditation),¹ to appear in person in the field of battle with assumption of a visible warrior form. Teach me that unbelief which causes Thee in Thy intense love to place on the hard neck and shoulder of the restless Dānava² the beauteous lotus-foot, which is the treasure of the heart of Maheśvara.³ O Mother, full of unbounded mercy! there is nothing in the three worlds to compare with this mercy of Thine. It is by reason of this that Thou art, O Mother! the Mother of the Universe. What better proof of Thy mercy is there than this, that Thou hast no enemy in the Samsāra other than Thy son?⁴ Hallowed is the merciful Mother! Hallowed art Thou, hallowed is Thy mercy, and still more hallowed is Thy inimical son! Brother critic! as you are my friend, I tell you with tears in my eyes that everyone is hallowed in this Samsāra, which is the Mother's dominion. But you and I, unfortunate as we are, seem to be the most unhappy of those who are unhallowed. We are neither faithless nor faithful. We have neither been able to become enemies nor sons. In deep sorrow and with tears, therefore, I say: "Tell me, Mother! where am I to stand, Mother?"

She alone knows where I am to stand. But I am here to say what I have heard about the path. I shall, therefore, tell you one or two more things to-day. I hear that you are given to saying at every word "image-worshippers are worshippers of unconscious matter".⁵ From this it indirectly follows that you are a worshipper of consciousness itself. It is not at all strange, but rather natural, on your part for you to say that image-worshippers are worshippers of unconscious matter, for "a person speaks only of that which he understands," and no one can blame him for so doing. There is, therefore, nothing to say to you on the score that you call image-worshippers, worshippers of unconscious matter. But we shall to-day ask you one or two things, because you are a worshipper of Brahman Himself, who is consciousness itself.

You know that the verbal root *br̥ngha* means to pervade, and that Brahman is the name of Him who pervades the Universe. You are also

¹ Dhyāna.

² Son of Danu, enemy of the Devas.

³ It is the Devī's love which leads her to punish the Asuras. As the latter have thus drawn the love of the Devī, even though it takes the form of punishment, the author expresses himself to be envious of the Asuras, enemies of the Devas, who are thus more fortunate than great Yogīs (see verses 8 and 9 of the Hymn to Jagadambikā in Chapter xix of the Devībhāgavata Purāṇa, translated in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess").

⁴ That is, She looks on them as Her sons, although they are Her enemies.

in the habit of saying that Brahman is consciousness itself. Being a worshipper of that Brahman, with what heart, O brother! can you call an image unconscious matter? Is it an expression of faith on your part to say that He who pervades the Universe, who pervades everything and exists everywhere, who is equally present everywhere from Heaven to Hell,¹ does not exist in an image? It may, to a certain extent, become a dualist to say that "unconscious matter and consciousness are two different things". But being a worshipper of undefinable² Brahman, with what face do you admit the existence of that which is called "unconscious matter" as distinct from consciousness? You may, of course, escape by saying, "Be it unconscious matter or consciousness, I do not care for worship at all." But in that case also you are in another way bound to admit that there is nothing which can be called unconscious matter. You call these things unconscious matter in which you do not see any sign of consciousness, as, for instance, earth, water, wood, stone, and so forth. Now, I ask, is it because there is really no consciousness in these things that you regard them as unconscious, or is it because you yourself have not the eye to see them otherwise? Many people, again, say that such things as plants, trees, shrubs, creepers, and so forth, are unconscious. Perhaps they think that eating, sleeping, fearing, and having sexual intercourse,³ are four inseparable marks of Jivahood, and that all such things as are without them are unconscious. The Śāstra, however, says that plants, creepers, and so forth, are not unconscious things, but unmoving Jīvas. Manu says: "Through faults arising out of the body—that is to say, sins committed by means of the body—men become unmoving things (are born as plants, shrubs, creepers, and so forth)⁴; that is to say, the punishment for such sins consists in this, that in their subsequent birth such men are unable to do any desired work by their physical exertion. Through sins committed by speech men are born as birds or beast; that is to say, the punishment for such sins consists in this, that in their subsequent birth these men have not the faculty of speech. As the result of sins committed by mind, men are born in the lowest castes. The object of such punishment is that in their subsequent birth they may not be endowed with broad intelligent⁵ minds. It is merely in order to determine where we stand that we quote this passage from Manu. In fact, there are many others. Hundreds and thousands of reasons and authorities may be given and quoted in this connection, but we are afraid of digressing. What we want to show by the above passage is that plants, creepers, and

¹ Svarga to Naraka.

² Nirviśeṣa—that is, to whom no limiting attribute can be given.

³ See *ante*.

⁴ Author's parenthesis.

so forth, are not unconscious or inert, but living things, that they, too, are born and die, share happiness, prosperity, and adversity, and so forth, in a remarkable degree, with, however, this difference from other living things, that while we can clearly observe the changes which are caused in the latter by happiness and sorrow, we do not perceive similar changes in the case of trees, creepers, and so forth. There are two reasons for this difference. First, the force of consciousness¹ which exists as Jīva in a plant or creeper is completely overpowered by the force of Māyā²; and secondly, the changes which are caused in plants and the like by happiness and sorrow are so fine that our senses, gross as they are, have not the keenness and subtlety to perceive them. Only Ṛṣis, who have attained Siddhi by Tapas³ and see all things, and Devas and Devayonis⁴ (Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Vidyādhara, and so forth), have the power to perceive them. For this reason we read in Paurāṇik and similar stories that whenever some great person has through a curse taken birth as a plant or the like, Ṛṣis or Devas have, on knowing when the curse comes to an end, delivered him from life as an unmoving thing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself bears evidence of this in the incident of the breaking of the trees Yamala and Arjuna.⁵

Next, as to stones and metals. It is not necessary to deal separately with the subject of metals, for metals exist in mines in the womb of mountains, and there is no difference between stones and metals as regards consciousness or unconsciousness. A mountain is a great living thing, and the greatest⁶ of things that spring out of earth. It is in mountains that the earth's power of bearing burden is mainly seated. Hence mountains are called "supporters of the earth".⁷ Mountains rise, grow, and become decayed. They rise by piercing through the earth; they grow by extending to the earth; and, again, during the time of their decay they gradually sink into the womb of the earth. As a mountain rises by penetrating through the earth, inch by inch, in thousands and hundreds of thousands of years, so it also disappears into the womb of the earth inch by inch during the same periods. A mountain has also birth and death. In a dead tree there remains no vitality. The stones of a dead mountain

¹ Cit-śakti.

² Māyāśakti.

³ Austerity, devotion, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

⁴ Spirits emanating from the Devas and the Deva world. Deva eva yonih nidānabhūtāt yaśya.

⁵ There is a tree called Arjuna. Śrī Kṛṣṇa broke a twin Arjuna-tree, and two Devayonis sprang forth, who had been cursed by a Ṛṣi. The author here speaks of Yamala and Arjuna, but Yamala means twin, and it should be "twin Arjuna trees".

⁶ Literally, crest-gem.

⁷ Earth is that which is the supporter of everything, and it is mainly through the mountains that it is so, for they are the greatest masses of earth, and the

become rough and destitute of moisture, like the dry wood of a dead tree; and as does such wood, they break into pieces under light blows. Dealers in stones who are versed in the science of the subject unhesitatingly admit this. They can also show, on an examination of them, which mountain is alive and which is dead. But perhaps you are shaking your sides with laughter on hearing that mountains have life. But can you say that to-day the mountains are not laughing on seeing you laugh in this way? Can you show any substance in the world which has no life, and yet grows and decays? The longevity of a mountain is lakhs of crores¹ of years, thousands of Yugas,² hundreds of Manvantras,³ while you and I are not reckoned as even insignificant bubbles in the vast sea of time. How is it possible for us in a single life to probe into the question of consciousness or unconsciousness of a mountain by observing its birth and death? Who can say how many times⁴ you and I are to be re-incarnated during the one life-time of a single mountain? It does not therefore become us to determine the question of consciousness or unconsciousness of a mountain, though we cannot see its birth and death. We, however, daily see the growth and decay of small hills, and from this you can very well realize whether a mountain is conscious or unconscious.

Then comes the question of earth. Consciousness of earth is still more subtle—indeed, as subtle as any matter can be. It is extremely difficult to discover it with the help of physical perception alone. It can be ascertained only by means of Divine⁵ powers attained by Sādhana. It is not therefore capable of explanation. Besides this, even if we think that the earth is unconscious, we must consider whether it is really so; whether earthly atoms are seats of the play of unconscious forces⁶ only, or whether the force of consciousness lies in a subtle form within them and achieves its purposes by means of these unconscious forces which it has made its servants. Let us assume that earth is the seat of the play of unconscious forces only. But there, where I saw yesterday a stretch of barren earth, I see to-day the sprouting of new tender shoots. Whence has this vitality of conscious living things come to the inert atoms of unconscious earth? This is the first stage. The subsequent stages are still more wonderful. Before our eyes the shoots grow into stalks and leaves and gradually bear fruit. When the crop becomes ripe, it is eaten by men,

¹ A lakh equals 100,000 and a crore is 10,000,000.

² A Yuga or age is a portion of a Kalpa, or day of Brahmā of 4,320,000,000 years (see next note).

³ The Kalpa is divided into fourteen Manvantras, which are again subdivided into seventy-one Mahāyuga, each of which is composed of Yugas.

⁴ Literally, "how many eighty-four lakhs of times."

beasts, and birds, and is digested in the fire of the stomach. The essence of the digested crop is then transformed into fat, semen, and blood in the body. In the womb again the semen and blood are digested and grow into the living, conscious child in the womb. However learned we may be in various Śāstras, we are unable to realize this directly, the mother alone being able to do so. Gradually when, after ten months and ten days, the child issues from the mother's womb, we then see that the eating of an unconscious crop has produced this conscious fruit. If the semen and blood had not the force ¹ of consciousness in them, whence has consciousness come to the child? If the crop which has been eaten had no consciousness in it, whence did consciousness come in the semen and blood? If the tree had not consciousness in it, whence did consciousness come in the crop? And if earth had no consciousness in it, whence did consciousness come in the tree? Now, critic, who talks of unconsciousness! Tell me, is it the earth which is unconscious, or is it you and I who are so? Is it not a sign of one's own unconsciousness to consider the earth as earthen only, when it is thus full of consciousness in a subtle form. What can be more idiotic than to hold that the soil of the earth is unconscious matter, when men, beasts, birds, insects, trees, shrubs, mountains, and all else derive their consciousness from the force of consciousness contained in every atom of the earth, and to ridicule away with ideas that which has puzzled the brains of even philosophers? The philosopher has said:

“Unconscious semen becomes instinct with consciousness during its stay in the womb. Gradually hands, head, and various other organs spring up. Again, that same semen which has thus grown into a Jīva takes on successively the attributes ² of childhood, youth, old age, infirmity, and so forth, one after another, and sees, eats, hears, smells, and moves about. What greater magic can there be than this?”

Here it may be objected that, if worship can be performed with earth, stones, wood, metal, and such other things, having regard to the Brahman-consciousness existing in a subtle form within it, why cannot it be performed with the bodies of men, beasts, birds, and so forth, in which that consciousness is more manifest? We ask in reply, Who is it who says that worship is not performed in this way? In fact, it is so performed; the worship of the supreme Brahman appearing as Guru is done towards the human body of the Guru, Kumārī ³ is worshipped in the bodies of virgins. The Spouse of Śiva is worshipped in the animal body of jackals, and it is in the form of the Brāhmiṇī bird ⁴ that the daughter of Dakṣa grants Siddhi to a Sādhaka's Sādhana. All this is worship done with other bodies. But a Sādhaka must first of all worship his Iṣṭadevatā in his own body, and then

¹ Śakti.

² Upādhi.

³ The Devī as a virgin.

he will be entitled to do worship of Her in other bodies. Worship with portions¹ of Brahma-caitanya² leads to perfection³ of Brahma-Jñāna⁴ and not to the perfection of Brahman-worship.⁵ For the purpose of Brahman-worship it is necessary to worship a form which has been assumed by the Devatā to show Himself to Sādhakas and to bestow favours on them. This image, again, must not be a production of the Sādhaka's imagination only. Such images alone should be worshipped as are images of forms actually assumed by Her. The worship also must be performed in the method approved of by the Śāstra, and then Sādhana performed according to the Śāstra is sure to lead to Siddhi.⁶ Mantra-Śakti⁷ wields sole authority wherever Siddhi is concerned. In Sādhana with Mantra the Devatā's real form is revealed by the Śakti of the Mantra. Hence the only form which I should meditate on is the form which is the subject of the Mantra in which I am initiated. In my own self I can meditate on that form for a very short time only. But so long as this meditation does not develop into perfect Samādhi,⁸ I have not the power to hold that true form of Her constantly in my heart. It is therefore as an aid to this end that the same form is worshipped outwardly in images. Secondly, unswerving meditation is impossible at the time of worship. I am the worshipper, She is the worshipped, and to worship is my duty. No worship is possible without this three-fold knowledge.⁹ Moreover, when we make our various offerings we are thinking of these things. Single-pointed meditation is never possible when so many different forms of knowledge crowd together in the mind. For this reason there can be no outer worship without the establishment of an outer image.

It may, however, be asked, Why should the Śakti, which is Her real aspect, appear in the outer image at my desire. That is a different question. On the one hand, images made of earth, stone, and so forth, are given the forms which Mantraśakti has revealed in the Śāstra, so that the condition is immensely favourable, instead of being unfavourable to the appearance of that true Śakti in them. On the other hand, Mantraśakti will awake by its own force and unite the Brahma-tejas in the heart of the Sādhaka

¹ Amśa.

² Brahman as consciousness.

³ Siddhi.

⁴ Brahman knowledge, or spiritual knowledge.

⁵ By worshipping the objects in which the Brahman exists, a man's knowledge of Brahman may be perfected; but, considered as worship, it is not the worship of Brahman in its entirety, which is only accomplished in the case of Avatāras on the earthly or spiritual plane, such as the Mahāvīdyās.

⁶ Fruition.

⁷ The potency of Mantra, or rather Śakti as Mantra.

⁸ Ecstasy, or the attainment of the tūrīya consciousness (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

with the Tejas in the outer form of the Devatā, and then the two Tejas will together burn like a sacrificial fire, accepting the offerings made by the Sādhaka. What is there in this for you or I to object to, or rack our brains over?

Mantra alone, which is the mediator in the affair, is responsible for it. Mantra will, by its own power, bring divinity ¹ to the image; you and I need not be anxious about it. It is for this reason that Mantraśakti ² is at the root of all Sādhana. Mantra can, by becoming one only Īśvara (that is, supreme over all), cause such events by means of its super-worldly power as the three worlds or the universe cannot accomplish by their united effort. It is because Mantra possesses such wonderful power, that you and I, mere men though we be, are able to worship Devatā. The Śāstra has, therefore said: "If the worshipper has strength of Tapasyā ¹ (that is to say, if his Mantra is conscious), ² and if there is an abundance of offerings (that is to say, if such offerings inspire the Sādhaka's heart with single-pointed devotion to the Devatā), ³ and if the image represents the true form of the Devatā (that is to say, if at the sight of the image the Sādhaka's mind and eyes sink in the sea of its beauty, sweetness, and gracefulness), ³ then the Devatā readily approaches that image." In order to gain for oneself the different Śaktis which Brahmayi has put in different Yantras ⁴ in this house of the Universe, such as river, sea, mountain, tree, shrub, creeper, and so forth, it is necessary to worship Her in these Yantras. ⁵ This is the ground of Her worship in jackals, Brāhmiṇī kites, cremation grounds, ⁶ dead bodies, women, ⁷ bael-trees, aśvattha trees, aparājītā flowers, cows, bulls, Brāhmaṇas, places of pilgrimage, fire, and so forth. Opportunity offering, we shall try to explain the principles of this subject in its proper place. Here this much only should be understood, that in whatever Yantra or image She may be worshipped, it is the worship of Herself in that form. ⁸ For this reason even Vedāntik Daṇḍis, ⁹ who take refuge with knowledge only, have said in the Pañcadaśī: "In the Viśvarūpa portion ¹⁰

¹ Devatva.

² See *ante*.

³ Author's own interpretation.

⁴ Instruments.

⁵ In order to acquire the Śakti of Hers, which is manifested as rivers, mountains, etc., it is necessary to worship Her under those aspects. This refers to minor Siddhis. Thus it is said that when Rāma Kṛṣṇa Paramahansa was with another Sādhaka travelling to Dakṣiṇēśvara on a dark night, this Sādhaka turned his back to him, and light issued from it. It would be said that that power was gained by Agni (fire) Sādhana.

⁶ Śmaśānas.

⁷ Śaktis.

⁸ Svarūpa Vibhūti—e.g., if a tree be worshipped as Devatā, it is not the tree which is worshipped, but the Devī in the form of a tree.

⁹ A sect of ascetics.

of the Puruṣa Sūkta,¹ it has been said, from Brahmā, to a blade of grass everything is a limb of the vast² macrocosmic body of Bhagavān (1). Īśvara, Sūtrātmā,³ Virāṭa, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Indra, Agni, Vighna,⁴ Bhairava, Mairāla, Mārika, Yakṣa, Rākṣasa, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, cow, horse, deer, bird, Aśvattha, banian, mango, and other trees, barley, paddy grass, and other crops, water, stone, earth, wood, axe, spade, and so forth—all are Īśvara. When worshipped as Īśvara they grant fruits according to the Śaktis, inherent in their respective Yantras⁵ (2-4). The fruit of the worship will be according to the Yantra and the mode in which the worshipper performs the worship. The differences in quality which are found to exist in these fruits are caused by differences in the character of the Yantras of worship and of the worship itself, according as it is Sāttvik, Rājāsik, or Tāmasik.⁶ But liberation can never be attained without a knowledge of the Brahman, just as we sleep until we awaken ourselves. When one attains to knowledge of the non-dualistic Brahman, all this Universe of conscious and unconscious things in the forms of Īśvara, Jīva, and so forth, appears to be nothing but a dream (5-7)."

Three causes operate for the attainment of this knowledge of Brahman: (1) Hearing,⁷ thinking⁸ and constant meditation,⁹ prescribed in the Vedānta Philosophy; (2) practice of Yoga; and (3) Sādhana, consisting of a combination of the three things—Karma (work), Yoga, and Jñāna (knowledge), with Bhakti (devotion) as their root.¹⁰ Of these three means the last is the easiest, most pleasant, most rapidly effective, and is suited to all the three classes of worshippers—namely, those who are given to worldly pursuits, those who are dissatisfied with the world, and those who yearn for liberation. In the realm of devotion the most worshipful and supreme objects of adoration¹¹ are those forms only¹² of the Supreme Devatā Parameśvarī, in which She as the central source of all Śaktis has manifested Herself in order to make worship possible. The ultimate Siddhi spoken of in the Tantra Śāstra

¹ The Vaidik Sūkta of that name.

² Virāṭa. The whole Universe is considered to be the body of the Devatā, its constituent parts being the microcosmic aspect.

³ That is, the Ātmā considered as the continuing thread on which the objective world is strung and which it infuses.

⁴ Vighna Devatā. Gaṇeśa is so called as remover of obstruction. What follows and precedes are Devas, Devayonis, castes, etc.

⁵ That is, the Sādhaka acquires the Śakti which is manifested in the objects

⁶ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

⁷ Śravaṇa. See as to this and two following *op. cit. supra*.

⁸ Manana.

⁹ Nididhyāsana.

¹⁰ Commencement must be made with Bhakti.

dances on the palms of the hands ¹ of such men as are not satisfied with Siddhi acquired from the worship of partial manifestations ² from Brahmā to a blade of grass described above as Her Virāṭa Vibhūti, but are desirous of attaining single-pointed devotion and liberation. They alone are competent to worship the Parabrahma aspect spoken of in the Tantra Śāstra of Her who is Parabrahman. It is for them that the Mother of the three worlds, who is Turiya consciousness, ³ has assumed that Brahman aspect, which is massive consciousness, ⁴ and bliss, and full of play. ⁵ And it is for them that the Tantra Śāstra has loudly said: "Without a doubt he who enters upon the great path of Kuladharmā ⁶ will soon walk into the city of liberation. A man should therefore place himself under the direction of a Kaula."

¹ That is, "is easily attained by".

² Vibhūtis.

³ The fourth state.

⁴ Cidāhara—that is, nothing but a mass of consciousness.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PLAY OF GUṆAS ¹

HE as Śiva is sweet of form with infinite Guṇas, notwithstanding that He is the immutable Being, above Guṇas; ² the only Lord and Controller of the Tamas Guṇa, though that is of His substance; ³ self-manifest and luminously white, like a silver mountain, though seated on the throne of (the dark) Tamas Guṇa ⁴; the Supreme Guru of spiritual knowledge, though His substance is of the Tamas Guṇa; found in great cremation grounds, ⁵ notwithstanding that He is the Lord of inconceivable wealth; an untraversable, calm, and solemn ocean, ⁶ though He is the Mahārudra of the great dissolution ⁷; dependent on the bliss of his own Sādhana, ⁸ notwithstanding that He is all joy itself; merciful and loving in appearance, in spite of being wrong-eyed ⁹; the guide in the path of worship of Himself, though He is the worshipped of the three worlds; the owner of half of the body of the Daughter of Mountain, ¹⁰ even though He is the one eternal unity; the seeker ¹¹ of the company of Her who is His eternal companion notwithstanding that He is companionless ¹²; the destroyer of the passion of desire, ¹³ though He eternally appears in the coupled ¹⁴ form of husband and wife; the grantor unasked of eternal liberation ¹⁵ to all Jīvas in the city of Kāśī, ¹⁶ despite his being the Dispenser of all fruits of action to the whole

¹ Guṇalīlā; Guṇa is "Quality" (see as to this *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

² Niṣkalatattva, or the Tattva without Kala or Prakṛti.

³ He is tamoguṇamaya.

⁴ See *ante*, note. Śiva as such subdues manifestation (sattva).

⁵ Śmaśānas.

⁶ He is both the ocean of peace and the destroyer.

⁷ In His form as the great Rudra (Mahārudra) of the great dissolution (Mahāpralaya). ⁸ Śiva was Himself a great Sādhaka.

⁹ Virūpākṣa. His eyes are represented as being in a dreaming, half-closed, and slanting position, like the eyes of those who have taken bhang. He is also, according to some, called Virūpākṣa, because he is three-eyed.

¹⁰ Pārvatī.

¹¹ Sādhaka. ¹² Nihsamga, unattached to anything, as are Yogīs.

Universe; easily appeased,¹ even though he is also formidable and wrathful²; blue-throated, though he is also white³; the Saviour of the three worlds through his drinking deadly poison,⁴ yet also their Destroyer; taking pleasure in adorning Himself with serpents,⁵ despite his being the Director, grey with ashes⁶, to the path of everlasting dispassion; crested with the crescent moon, though His head is covered with matted hair⁷; the carrier of trident and axe, though He grants blessing and dispels fear⁸; prostrate under the feet of the Devī with dishevelled hair, notwithstanding that He is Himself the grantor of liberation to devotees⁹; the Mahābhairava,¹⁰ who drinks the wine¹¹ of joy, in spite of being perfect joy Himself; the crier of "Fear not,"¹² though He is Himself a Bhairava¹³; five-faced,¹⁴ in spite of being thousand-headed¹⁵; three-eyed; even though He has eyes which turn towards all things in the Universe; clad in space,¹⁶ notwithstanding that He is Himself space; of infinite forms, though of eight forms¹⁷; the Preceptor of knowledge, though knowledge itself; He who brings us liberation, and yet attainable through liberation; the Lord of Kailāsa and Kāśī,¹⁸ though He is the Lord of the world; the Lord of all creatures,¹⁹ though also the Master of the Spirit world²⁰; the Lord of creatures,²¹

¹ Aṣutośa. This with simplicity is one of the chief qualities which make Him lovable to Devotees.

² Ūgra.

³ Śiva is represented white as a mountain of silver. The blue mark on His throat was caused by His drinking (in order to save the world) the poison which issued from the churning of the ocean.

⁴ See last note.

⁵ Śiva is represented as garlanded with serpents, and as here taking pleasure in the play of such adornment, notwithstanding that neither this nor any other worldly thing is of concern to Him who is the accomplisher of liberation.

⁶ Śiva, as do the Yogīs, smears His body with ashes.

⁷ Jaṭājūta worn by ascetics; either their own hair or the hair of others bound up in a high twisted and matted mass on the crown of the head.

⁸ In His hands He carried the trident (triśūla) and axe (paraśu), and with two others makes the gestures (mudrā) called vara and abhaya.

⁹ Śiva is generally represented as Śava (corpse), lying under the feet of Devī, for without Her Śakti (power) He is inert.

¹⁰ A Bhairava is he who follows vīrācāra.

¹¹ Kāraṇa, a technical term in Tantra for wine.

¹² Mā bhaya.

¹³ That is, formidable and the causer of fear.

¹⁴ Pañcānana.

¹⁵ Sahasraśiṣa.

¹⁶ Digambara, or naked.

¹⁷ The aṣṭamūrti of Śiva—viz., Bhava (water), Sarvva (earth), Paśupati (man the sacrificer), Bhīma (ether), Ūgra (air), Rudra (fire), Mahādeva (moon), Iśāna (sun).

¹⁸ The mountain Kailāsa, His abode (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*), and Benares, the city sacred to Him.

¹⁹ Bhūtapati, living on earth as opposed to ghosts which follow.

though the destroyer of the bonds of the Paśu¹; He who upholds Gangā in His plaited hair,² though fire is in the eye on His forehead; the Destroyer of Dakṣa's sacrifice,³ though He is the Supreme Lord⁴ of all Yajñas; sorely grieved at sight of the play⁵ of the Devī's death,⁶ though Himself above all delusion⁷; the son-in-law of the King of Mountains,⁸ notwithstanding that He is beyond all relationship; the father of young Heramba,⁹ though He is Himself the Parabrahma¹⁰; the Linga,¹¹ which is the source of the origin of the entire Universe; the eternal cause of Yoganidrā,¹² though attainable by Karma, Jñāna, and Yoga¹³; the sole Saviour of the world of devotees, though also the Destroyer of the three worlds; the constant companion of devotees,¹⁴ and yet also attainable by Jñānīs¹⁵; friend of the poor, and yet omnipresent; the Lord of the helpless, and yet the Lord of the three worlds; loving towards supplicants, yet also loving towards the whole Universe; the sole Lord of Tāntrik Mantras, though being the object of worship in all Mantras and Yantras¹⁶; the eternal King of Kings¹⁷ on the throne of the devotee's heart, notwithstanding that He is the one Īśvara (Lord) in the infinite world.

Again, as Kṛṣṇa, He is the master-actor, cunning and full of deception,¹⁸ though Himself undisturbed by the waves of dualism; the assumer of a sweet form with three-fold bend,¹⁹ in spite of being above all

¹ The Paśu is the unillumined man bound by the bonds (pāśa), which, according to the enumeration of the Kulārṇava Tantra, are pity, ignorance, shame, family, custom, and caste.

² Śiva held the Ganges in His hair when it was called down from heaven by Bhagiratha, and fire flashes from His third eye.

³ Yajña, according to the well-known legend as to which, see *ante*.

⁴ Īśvara. Śiva is Yajñeśvara.

⁵ Līlā; for all which Devatās do is such.

⁶ At the sacrifice of Dakṣa on hearing Her husband slighted by the former.

⁷ Māyā and moha.

⁸ Śiva's Spouse Pārvatī was the daughter of Himavat (Himālaya).

⁹ Gaṇeśa.

¹⁰ And beyond all causal forms.

¹¹ Phallus.

¹² "Sleep of Yoga." Jivaśakti produces diversity. Yoganidrā Śakti accomplishes unity—namely, that Śakti of Brahman which establishes unity with Him.

¹³ Action, knowledge, and Yoga.

¹⁴ Bhakta.

¹⁵ Those "who know" and who have acquired spiritual knowledge.

¹⁶ Diagrams of worship (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹⁷ Rājārājeśvara.

¹⁸ Kapaṭa śaṭa. Thus He pretended to suck the breast of Pūtānā, who was sent to destroy Him, but in doing so He sucked out her life (her prāṇavāyu).

¹⁹ Tribhanga, a position loved of the Hindu artist. The body makes three bends: the head is turned to one side, the opposite hip is thrown out, and the

changes of nature¹; beautiful with the dark colour of water-laden clouds,² though he is pure Sattva itself³; incarnated as the son of the ruler of Vraja⁴ for the purpose of relieving the earth of her burden, though Himself the Perfect Brahman who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, the wearer of garlands of gunja seeds,⁵ and yet possessed in full of the six forms of Lordliness⁶; covered with the dust of Bṛndāvana,⁷ and yet being the adored of the Lakṣmī of Vaikuṇṭha⁸; a herdsboy, though the supporter of the three worlds; the beggar of food from a Brāhmaṇa lady, though He is Himself the provider of the Universe⁹; decked with peacock's feathers, in spite of his possession of infinite beauty; the wearer of yellow-tinted loin-cloths, though he is beyond the covering of Māyā¹⁰; He who took the help of Balarāma,¹¹ though He Himself helps the entire Universe; Who wandered in pastures,¹² and yet Who moved in the hearts of great Yogis; upholder of Mount Góvardhana,¹³ though also the upholder of the infinite Universe; the destroyer of the arrogance of Kamsa¹⁴ and Kāliya,¹⁵ and yet the peaceful charmer of Madana¹⁶; the Dāmodara,¹⁷ who holds the Universe in his belly, though appearing in the form of a young herdsboy; the charmer of Brahmā, though He is Himself Hari, Hara, and Brahmā; out of His love full of fear for Yaśodā,¹⁸ notwithstanding that He is the Fear of Fear itself; ever present in Bṛndāvana,¹⁹ though also present in every atom of the

¹ Bhāva vikāra. The tribhanga is crooked. His straightness or uniformity is contrasted therewith.

² Kṛṣṇa's body is a very dark blue.

³ The Guṇa is here thought of as colourless.

⁴ Nanda, Kṛṣṇa's foster-father.

⁵ A small red berry, with a black spot on top, used as a weight by goldsmiths.

⁶ Aiśvarya, such as omnipotence, omnipresence, and the like.

⁷ The city of Bṛndāvan, sacred to Kṛṣṇa.

⁸ The Tutelary Goddess of the heaven of Viṣṇu, as to which see *ante*.

⁹ He once begged food of a Brāhmaṇa woman in order to show her favour.

¹⁰ Māyā is represented as a veil covering the pure Spirit.

¹¹ His brother.

¹² As a cowherd.

¹³ In order to save Bṛndāvan from a great deluge.

¹⁴ Asura, King of Mathura, who attempted to destroy Kṛṣṇa, his sister's (Devakī) son.

¹⁵ The serpent destroyed by Him.

¹⁶ The God of Love or Desire. He surpasses Madana in attractiveness.

¹⁷ He in whose belly (Udara) all Dāmas—that is, regions (Lokas)—are located. Viṣṇu is called Dāmodara also, because he has Dama, or self-control, and Svaprakāśa, or self-manifestation. In Harivamśā it is said that Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa's foster-mother, tied a rope round his belly, and fastened it to a Udūkhala (husking-bowl) to keep him out of mischief while she was doing her household

infinite Universe; the stealer of the clothes of young girls performing Kātyāyanī Vrata,¹ though He is also the supplier of innumerable clothes to Draupadī when oppressed with shame and fear for her honour²; rejoicing in the sound of a flute, notwithstanding that He is the source of Nāda, Bindu, Dhvani, and Mūrchanā³; ever eager to enjoy the Rāsa⁴; of Rāsa,⁵ though He is Himself the great Rāsa⁶; grieved at Rādhikā's anger of love,⁷ and yet eternally full of joy; constantly seeking⁸ the company of Rādhikā, though He is sought by Her⁹ who seeks supreme love; ever bound, as it were by cords, by the love of the beauties of Vraja,¹⁰ notwithstanding that He is eternally free, unattached, and without attribute; proficient in the amorous arts of women, and yet free of all sensuality¹¹; a youth victorious in war with passion,¹² and yet immersed in the midst of waves of passion¹³; who appears separately to each of the innumerable groups of innumerable herdswomen,¹⁴ though He is Himself one without a second; restless and mad in His play as Brahman, though incarnated by way of play as a man; making Himself out to be adulterous to His own wives¹⁵ in order to delude unhappy Jīvas devoid of Sādhana; He who

¹ Gopīs performed the worship of Kātyāyanī before the Rāsa festival, at which time Kṛṣṇa stole their clothes in order to make them appear before Him naked.

² It is narrated in the Mahābhārata that when Draupadī was brought to the Court of Dhritarāṣṭra, one of his sons, in order to insult her, began pulling off her cloth. She then prayed to Kṛṣṇa, who supplied her with an endless cloth for the protection of her person.

³ Different aspects of Śakti as subtle "sound". Mūrchanā, as a term of gross sound in the form of music, is the seventh of the grāma or gamut (seven notes—sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni), corresponding with the European scale—c, d, e, f, g, a, b. The intervals between them are the sub-tones or Śrūtis, of which there are twenty-two. The grāmas are threefold—low, middle, and high, or Udārā, Mudārā, Tārā, corresponding with the three Svaras, Udātta, Anudātta, and Svarita pronounced from the navel, chest, and head, and called by the musicians nābhi (navel), bakṣa (chest), kapāla (head). As there are seven tones and three grāmas, there are twenty-one Mūrchanās.

⁴ Essence of delight.

⁵ The Rāsa festival.

⁶ Bliss. All forms of bliss are from the Brahman, who is Bliss itself (rasovai sah).

⁷ Māna, such as happens between husband and wife who are yet attached to one another.

⁸ Sādhaka.

⁹ Rādhikā.

¹⁰ The herdswomen who loved Him.

¹¹ Kāmadoṣa.

¹² Kāma.

¹³ Not that He is overcome by it, but exists in the midst of it.

¹⁴ To gratify the beautiful herdswomen (Gopī), His devotees, He appeared to each of them as if she alone was enjoying Him. There were thus as many Kṛṣṇas as there were Gopīs.

¹⁵ Rukminī and Satyabhāmā, to whom He appeared to be adulterous owing

points out the subtle course of Sādhana Dharma,¹ despite His being the Guard of the bridge of Samsāra Dharma¹; the rescuer of the triumphant standard of Sādhana Dharma¹ after defeat of Samsāra Dharma,¹ though He is the creator of both these Dharmas; partial² towards Dharma, and yet the dispenser of both Dharma and Adharma for the preservation of the world³; the constant friend of the Pāṇḍava⁴ family, though He has equal care for all things; the all in all to Bhaktas,⁵ though also the adored of Karmīs,⁶ Yogīs,⁷ and Jñānīs⁸; the seeker of refuge with devotees, notwithstanding that He is Himself the refuge of all who are refugeless.

Again, as Śakti She possesses infinite Guṇas, notwithstanding that She is the sum of all Śaktis above Guṇas; She is the establisher of concordance between mutually conflicting masses of Guṇas in the dualistic world, though Herself without a second; the dispeller of the devotees' fears, yet revelling Herself in battle⁹; the delight of the heart of Śiva, though also the Mother of the trinity of Devas¹⁰; the beloved daughter¹¹ of the great Mountain,¹² notwithstanding that She is the Brahman who is existence, consciousness, and bliss; possessed of eternally fresh youth, and yet the Mother of the Grandfather¹³ of the three worlds; beyond the reach of speech and mind, though omnipresent in the three worlds; partial towards Dharma, though She is above all contraries¹⁴; the Destroyer of the Daitya race,¹⁵ despite Her being the Mother of the Universe; again,

¹ The Dharma, which leads man out of the Samsāra, as opposed to that which keeps, but regulates, him in the world (Samsāra Dharma).

² Though to the Supreme there is no distinction between Dharma and Adharma, yet he leans (pakṣapāta) to the former.

³ He is the Dispenser of unrighteousness (Adharma), as also of Dharma, such evil being necessary for the preservation of the world.

⁴ The five sons of Pāṇḍu who warred with their cousins, the Kauravas, as related in the Mahābhārata.

⁵ Those who seek Him through devotion.

⁶ Those who seek Him through Karma or work.

⁷ Those who seek Him through Yoga.

⁸ Those who seek Him through Jñāna, or knowledge.

⁹ The Devī is a great warrior contending against the demoniac hosts of Asuras, Dānavas, and Daityas.

¹⁰ Whilst She is the Spouse of Śiva in Her form as Pārvati, in Her higher aspect of Śakti, of which Pārvati is but a partial manifestation. She is the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

¹¹ Pārvatī.

¹² Himālaya.

¹³ Brahmā (see ante).

¹⁴ Dharma and Adharma, or righteousness and unrighteousness; both issue from Her, though as Dharma is that which supports the worlds, She is, as its supporter, partial to it.

¹⁵ Destroyer of the Daityas.

the Deliverer of the Dānava race,¹ though also its destroyer; the Dweller in the sea of milk,² yet moving in all the seven seas³; the Dweller in the Isle of Gems,⁴ though also the Mistress of the seven Islands⁵; the Dweller in the house of Chintāmaṇi,⁶ and yet also above all name and form⁷; attached to the Pārijāta forest, though She is equally at home as in the forest; seated under the Kalpa tree,⁸ though being the eternal Kalpa creeper bearing the four-fold fruit of Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa⁹; seated on a jewelled throne, though to Her both ashes and jewels are the same; lying on the lotus-seat of Sadāśiva, the great Preta,¹⁰ though She is the Śakti, the container¹¹ of the infinite Universe; deeply black like black clouds, yet the giver of light to infinite millions of suns, moon, and other fires; blue like a mass of crushed collyrium,¹² though full of light¹³ and self-manifest; dark of colour,¹⁴ and yet the Dispeller glōwing with existence, consciousness, and bliss of the inner darkness in the world of innumerable devotees; garlanded with fifty heads, whilst rejoicing in the sounds of fifty letters,¹⁵ and of the lute¹⁶; the dweller in the Tripaṇcāra,¹⁷ despite the fact that She is above all Prapañcas¹⁸; crested with a crescent moon, yet averse to display; learned in the merriments of Kāla (time), though the expert baffler of Kāla (death); the dweller in great cremation grounds,¹⁹ notwithstanding that She is Mistress of the entire Universe; whose hair is ever dishevelled for the removal of the bonds which bind devotees,²⁰ despite the fact that She is Herself the Author of the bonds of existence;²¹ the Conqueror

¹ Sons of Danu; enemies of the Devas.

² Kṣīra.

³ Of milk, water, ghee, and honey, salt and sugar-cane juice.

⁴ Maṇidvīpa (see A. Avalon's "Mahānirvāṇa Tantra").

⁵ Jambu, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Kraūñca, Śaka, and Puṣkara.

⁶ The stone which grants all desires (see A. Avalon's "Mahānirvāṇa Tantra").

⁷ Upādhi (limiting conditions).

⁸ Desire-gratifying tree.

⁹ Religion, wealth, desire and its fulfilment, and liberation (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

¹⁰ Preta is literally the spirit of a person before the obsequial rites. In this connection it is used in the sense of corpse—that is, Śiva is inert, and can do nothing without Her vivifying Śakti.

¹¹ Ādhāra.

¹² Añjana.

¹³ Jyotiḥ.

¹⁴ The Devī, as Kālī, Tārā, and Chinnamastā, is represented of a black colour.

¹⁵ Varṇas. In Her terrible forms the Devī is garlanded with heads. As Kuṇḍalinī She is present in the fifty letters existing as Dhvani in the Tāttvik centres.

¹⁶ The Viṇā.

¹⁷ A Yantra with three times five (Tripaṇca) corners (Author's note).

¹⁸ Prapañca is that which is made of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether.

¹⁹ Śmaśānas.

of the right side by putting forth the right foot,¹ in spite of Her assuming the form of a woman whose place is the left side²; with fearful moving red eyes rolling with intoxication,³ and yet above all delusion⁴; smiling sweetly, though having a terrible countenance; the giver of blessings and of assurance of safety, yet at the same time bearing a sword and a severed head; the most shameless of women,⁵ and yet Herself the author of the feeling of shame; clad in space,⁶ though pervading in infinite space; mad after the delights of Yoga, despite of Her being all delight Herself; the beloved of Mahākāla,⁷ though the Mother of all things both moving and unmoving.

O Sādhaka! where else will you find such an incomparable infinite array of mutually conflicting Guṇas in one and the same person? It is as if the infinite number of Guṇas of Her whose substance is untold Guṇas had flown away from their centre of attraction and were moving about the infinite Universe, but have now found Her whose Guṇas they are, and rest in untroubled sleep, in their mother's arms, like children who, having lost, have found again their mother. O Sādhaka! in worship⁸ the principal place is awarded to the form with attributes.⁹ It is these Guṇas of Her whose substance is Guṇas which draw the Sādhaka's mind and heart from the Samsāra, thus giving him the enjoyment of incomparable peace in the cool shade of the Kalpa tree¹⁰ of Her beauteous feet. It is because that form is the seat of infinite Guṇas that it is so sweet and charming. Wherever a single Guṇa establishes its supremacy, it comes into conflict with other Guṇas. Where pity is supreme, severity is uncared for and banished; Guṇas are thus naturally conflicting. But where no Guṇa is supreme or the ruler, how can any one Guṇa be in conflict with another? Children quarrel bitterly over their food only so long as their mother does not come and divide it among them, and assign to each of them their respective places. Similarly, Guṇas quarrel with each other only so long as She who is above Guṇas does not take them up in Her own bosom, which is itself free from all attachment. At the touch of Her beauteous self all Guṇas disappear.¹¹ This is why Her Guṇas are not in mutual conflict; why streams of mercy flow from the Mother in the form of furious laughter;

¹ In the Dhyānas She is represented as putting forth the right foot.

² Vāmā, which means both female and left side.

³ Madabharaghūrṇita.

⁴ Māyā and Moha.

⁵ Nirlajja—without the physical or other shame of woman. She shows Herself naked, dances naked, drinks wine, etc.

⁶ Naked.

⁷ Śiva, the great Destroyer.

⁸ Upāsana.

⁹ Guṇa.

¹⁰ Vide ante.

¹¹ Literally. "All the Guṇas assume Nirguṇa aspect in spite of being Guṇas."

why the three worlds are deluged with waves of love of the Devī, who rejoices in war; why the Puruṣa, who is Nirguṇa and always blissful, pours forth His heart and rolls under Her feet, drawn thereto by the attraction of Guṇas and love of Her whose substance is bliss. Marvellous is the play of Guṇas of Her whose substance is Guṇas, a play which is, however, above Guṇas. Marvellous is the play of Guṇas of Her who is without Guṇa.¹ Marvellous is the array of Her Guṇas in the Samsāra which is with Guṇa.²

It is because Her Nirguṇa³ aspect cannot exist in the Saṅguṇa Samsāra⁴ that She who is above Guṇas has assumed forms in which we find the full play of Guṇas.⁵ Although in the terrestrial world She resides in the heart of every Jīva, he cannot find room for all Her Guṇas. For this reason it is ordained that She should be worshipped first in the image of unrevealed consciousness, in which are reflected infinite Guṇas, instead of in a Jīva, who is but a part of Her eternal revealed consciousness. When at length life is installed⁶ in the image, and Brahma-consciousness⁷ is infused into it by Mantraśakti,⁸ a Śakti, which is itself consciousness,⁹ appears in the image, earthen though it be, the like of which is never seen in the body of a Jīva, however much and with whatever devotion he may worship.¹⁰ Hence, although She is omnipresent, it is easiest to worship Her in an image. Bhagavān, the creator of all things, has therefore said: "Although milk is produced in all parts of a cow's body, it is obtained only from the teats of her udder. Similarly, although Devatā is all-pervading, Her true existence¹¹ is realized only in an image." Should anyone attempt to draw milk from the nose, tail, or any other part of a cow's body, on the ground that milk is produced in all parts of her body, he is certain to get for his pains only phlegm, dung, and other such things. Similarly, if anyone worships Her as a Jīva in a human body because She resides there as in all other things, he will discover the Jīva and not the

¹ Nirguṇa.

² Saṅguṇa.

³ Attributeless.

⁴ The world of attributes.

⁵ In Her all opposites meet. Therefore what appear to be Her Guṇas are not really Guṇas of Her who is above all Guṇas. What is Nirguṇa cannot exist in the Samsāra.

⁶ At the Prāṇapratiṣṭhā rite.

⁷ Brahmacaitanya.

⁸ Power of Mantra or Śakti as Mantra.

⁹ Chinmaya.

¹⁰ A conscious man is ever imperfect. So that he is not a fitting object for the reflection of all Her Guṇas in him; but the image being unconscious, it offers through Mantraśakti the best place for the reflection of Her Guṇas.

Brahman.¹ If, again, Brahman is worshipped in his partial aspect as Jīva, all his Śaktis are not revealed in such Jīva² body. If, again, for this reason, the limiting condition of Jīvahood be put aside and pure consciousness only is sought to be worshipped, what necessity is there for a Jīva's body? If Upādhis are omitted, the whole Universe is filled with Her presence. We thus come again to Her Nirguṇa aspect. When this matter³ of the Nirguṇa aspect is realized, there is no longer any necessity for worship. In order, therefore, to realize in the Saṅga state the presence of Brahman, who is eternally above Guṇas, and yet whose substance is eternally Guṇas, in order to feel the true presence of that Śakti, not by imagination, analogy, or example, but truly and directly by the force of Her command and by means of Mantra, there is no other means in the matter of worship than to worship the forms, full of play,⁴ assumed by Her of Her own will. This is the cause of the incomparable greatness of images. This is why an image is a pillar of support to Her worship. This is why an image-worshipper is entitled to Brahma-Kaivalya⁵ itself.

A Yantra also is like an image, the permanent seat of Her Brahma-play. But the subject of Yantra⁶ is one which should be learnt from a Guru only. We are unable to reveal its solemn secret depths to the public. At most, we can say that a Yantra is merely a true manifestation of Her Mantra form. None but Sādhakas of a very high order of competency can understand the subject of Yantras. A Guru will test his Śiṣya's condition before disclosing it to him. For this reason the Deva of Devas has, in the Kulārṇava Tantra, ordained:

"Hence, the principal part of worship is adoration of the Parameśvarī by preparing Her image or drawing Her Yantra. But, O my beloved! the worship should be performed according to the injunctions, after having learnt them all from the Guru."

Now, such as consider themselves famous, wise, and of great experience, on the ground that they have seen the map and read the geography of India, and who inwardly entertain the vanity of being

¹ Literally, the Jīva-Tattva, and not the Brahma-Tattva. In the ordinary case of image-worship the image of unrevealed consciousness is selected, as it affords a perfect mirror for the reflection of the internal conscious image. It is otherwise in the case of the partial revelation of consciousness in a Jīva. If the conscious Jīva as such is worshipped as Brahman, there is obviously merely the worship of Jīva by Jīva.

² Or title, Upādhi.

³ Tattva. The author here deals with three cases: (1) If a Jīva is worshipped as such, then nothing is thereby got. (2) If the Jīva be not so worshipped, but as a partial manifestation of the Brahman, then there is only a partial vision of Divine Śakti. (3) If all Upādhi is put aside and pure consciousness is worshipped, then we have done with body altogether.

accomplished Sādhakas, full of spiritual knowledge, on the ground of their having read the Yogavāsiṣṭha, Rāmāyaṇa, the Patañjala Sūtras, and the Pañcadaśī,¹ will perhaps, after all I have said, even now reply with their belief in set phrases, "What is invocation² or dismissal³ of that which is all-pervading?" There is no need to give a reply to all that such people object. This much only we say: If the notion that "He is omnipresent" had really a place in your heart, instead of being only a word in your mouth, would you in that case have spoken of such relativities as "you and I, that man and this man, he and who," and come forward to answer my words? Need I say O Brother! that the idea that "He is omnipresent" is contained in your books and not in your head? You have not and cannot have the capacity to understand the cause of the classification into Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga, and Karmayoga, or of the distinctions which exist between them. This is why the very name of invocation and dismissal⁴ throws you at first into a stupor,⁵ and then makes you burst out into a loud cry ten times every half an hour.⁶ Had you but the sense to understand that invocation and dismissal of the Devatā are nothing but the taking of the Devatā in the heart out of the heart and replacing the Devatā of the heart in the heart at the close of external worship; had even the germ of the notion that Siddhi in Sādhana is but the name given to the appearance of super-worldly divine Śakti existed in the impressions you acquired in previous births, you could never have asked such a question, "How can there be invocation or dismissal of Her?" We doubt whether the sense of understanding existed in the seed from which all this senseless affair has sprung, and therefore much less are we likely to find it in the flower and fruit.⁷ This is no exaggeration on our part. What has blossomed in the flower has come out in the fruit. Judge yourself from this, the power of the seed.⁸

Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy says: "O mind! what is this delusion of yours? Whom do you invoke or dismiss? You say 'come here' to the omnipresent Being who is everywhere! Who are you and whom do you invoke?"

¹ Books dealing with the Vedānta and Yoga.

² Āvāhana (see next note).

³ Visarjana. Both refer to invocation and dismissal of the Devatā, which is nothing but the rising into existence and the withdrawal of the Devatā-consciousness in the mind of the Sādhaka.

⁴ That is, of the Devatā.

⁵ Literally "into sleep" (Svapna).

⁶ Daṇḍa—22 daṇḍas=1 hour.

⁷ The meaning is that even Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy, who inaugurated the new school of "reformed" Hinduism, had not a clear idea of invocation and so forth. It is not, therefore, at all likely that his followers should have any better notions.

⁸ Possibly, the flower is Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy's writings, the fruit is his

What wonderful thing is this? You offer a seat to Him who holds the infinite Universe in Himself, and tell Him, 'Seat yourself here.' How absurd this is! And you utter hymns in praise of Him who is the master of this Universe, after having offered Him all kinds of food. How incongruous this seems to me!"

We need not ourselves give a reply to this. The reply which has been given by high-souled Digambara Bhaṭṭācārya, whose heart was in Sādhana, is sufficient. He says: "In delusion ¹ is my peace. What harm does invocation or dismissal do to anybody? Air fills every place, but still when the weather becomes oppressively hot, we say: 'Come, air! Come, O life-giver!' The Mother of the Universe pervades the Universe; but when I am overwhelmed with sorrow, I say: 'Come, O Brahmamayī, save me!' In fact, meditation, knowledge, water, fruit, and all else belong to Her whom I worship with living and inanimate things,² What harm does invocation or dismissal do to anybody?"

The delusion is not a thing to be shaken off; and if it can be, words or songs are not the means of effecting this. Why, then, suffer from all this mental disquietude by crying, "Delusion! delusion!" with tears in your eyes? The sleep is not to be broken. What, then, is the use of brooding over sorrow and distress and seeing the horror of bad dreams? It is, on the contrary, a sign of intelligence to think of longed-for happiness instead of sorrow, and to enjoy dreams of that happiness during sleep.³ This is why Digambara was blessed with Sādhana—was indifferent to this life, scorched by the fire of Samsāra, and said: "In delusion is my peace. What harm does invocation or dismissal do to anybody?" It does no harm to you, or to me, or to Him, who is invoked. Whom, then, does it harm? You are not harmed, because it is I who invoke. I am not harmed because I find peace in such invocation, nor is She whom I invoke harmed in any way. In Her eyes it is not I who am invoking, but She who is invoking Herself by becoming I. You and I think that you and I are invoking, but such invocation is, in fact, unreal. You may, however, ask, Why does She make this unreal invocation? We reply that you had better ask Her, instead of a mere Jīva, for a reply to this question: "Why, being Herself Brahman, She has become Jīva? Why, being existence, consciousness, and bliss, has She become entangled in the world of contraries and sorrows?" Full of the bliss of play ⁴ is She, and play ⁵ is Her play ⁵ of bliss. If, in this drama of Samsāra-play, She intoxicates Herself, with Her own

¹ Bhrānti, or error.

² That is, with various articles of worship, such as animals (in sacrifice), water, light, etc.

³ Get as much happiness as you can even in delusion.

bliss by appearing as Jīva and invoking Herself, or She Herself enjoys Her own peace by seeing dreams in Her own delusion, what harm does it do Her? And if, being a Jīva, I, considered as a Samsārī,¹ invoke Her, that invocation also is in accordance with Her command. What question of harm to Her can then arise over this? Hence, though he knew that this Samsāra was full of delusion, and had awakened from the horrible dream of the sleep of delusion, the cause of which he fully understood, the wild and deluded Sādhaka and unerring Tāntrika, Digambara, sinking in the sea of peace, has said: "In delusion is my peace." "You say, come here to the Omnipresent Being, who is everywhere. Who are you and whom do you invoke? What wonderful thing is this?"² There is no 'here or there' for Him who is Omnipresent; how, then, can it be said to Him, 'Come here?' "

Had Rāy³ looked into the matter a little more deeply, he would not most probably have said this; for it is universally admitted that there is no here or there for the Omnipresent Brahman. Whose, then, is this "here" in the phrase "Come here?" It is the Sādhaka who says it, and it is his own. Although there is no here or there for the Brahman, there is here or there for the Sādhaka. He says: "Come to this place of mine." Had I said, "Come to this place of Yours," I might some day be called to account for it. But the Sādhaka's "here," which is spoken of in the Śāstra, has through deficiency of intelligence in the interpreter, become Brahman's "here"; and, unfortunately, like one blind man resting on the shoulders of another blind man, you and I also have understood that this "here" is in reality Brahman's "here". If, after this, it is objected that there is no "here or there" for Brahman, how, on being asked to come here, can He actually come? Should anyone make this objection, we would ask him to go a little further. If there is no "here or there" for Brahman, there is also no coming or going for Him. Why, then, object to his "coming here" instead of at once objecting to the fundamental matter, the "coming" itself? For him for whom there is no coming and no going, there is also no eating, no dressing, no taking, no giving, and, in short, nothing which can be negated, and not even worship by you or me—nothing, nothing, nothing! Everything is thus cleared away and dismissed. This is what is called being too intelligent! Here Rāy ought to have understood that what he was saying belonged to a different province⁴ altogether.

¹ Inhabitant of the Samsāra—that is, from the the point of view of Jīva, and Samsāra.

² See *ante*.

³ Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy.

⁴ Adhikāra. That is, it was true as regards the Brahman aspect of things but false when applied to the Jīva aspect and his worship, which is necessarily

Its proper place is in the sphere of pure knowledge.¹ It has no place in the sphere of Upāsana,² which is Karma, with Jñāna, accomplished by Bhakti.³ To seek to ridicule a matter which belongs to one province⁴ by taking it into another is unjustifiable. This is what is called "absence of common sense."

Rāy again says: "Who are you? and whom do you invoke? What wonderful thing is this?" The cause of his wonder is: "Who are you? Whom do you invoke?" This "Who are you? Whom do you invoke?" can be explained in three ways. First, "Who are you? Whom do you invoke?" may mean, you are He, for a Jīva is a part of Brahman. This assumes a perfect knowledge of Brahman, and is consequently a repetition of the same blunder above mentioned; and, as we have already replied to this phase of the question, we have nothing to say about it here. The second way of interpretation is, "Who are you? And whom do you invoke?" That is to say, when She resides in your own heart, whom again do you invoke? We say, wonderful indeed must have been Rāy's knowledge of outer worship if he thought that for the purpose of that worship we invoke a Devatā other than the Devatā residing in our heart! He ought not to have ridiculed or even discussed a matter which he did not understand. "He who worships an outer Devatā, abandoning the Devatā resident in his heart, is like one who runs after a heap of ashes, having thrown away the gem which he holds in his hand." (For, unless the spirit⁵ of the Devatā residing in the heart is communicated to the outer image, the worship becomes a worship of the image only, and not of the Devatā.)⁶ If Rāy understood that the worship which was based on these words of the Śāstra was a worship of an outer Devatā, to the exclusion of the Devatā resident in the heart, then, also, he was greatly mistaken. Finally, the third way of interpretation is, "What are you? Whom do you invoke?" That is to say, "You are a Jīva smaller than the smallest, while She is greater than the greatest, boundless and external. How, then, is it possible for you to bring Her to you?" We reply, you and I have no reason to be anxious about this, for we do not worship Her according to a method devised by ourselves. The Śāstra is Her command, and we conduct ourselves according to it. She has Herself considered the question how we may bring Her to ourselves, and it is because She has done so that She has assumed forms and manifested Herself as Mantraśakti,⁷ and Herself made provision for Her worship accordingly. Moved by pity for Jīvas, She has

¹ Jñānakāṇḍa.

² Worship.

³ Action done with knowledge and accompanied by devotion.

⁴ Adhikāra.

⁵ Tejas. Force and energy, vitality.

⁶ Author's parenthesis.

(infinite though She is) assumed finite forms, sometimes immense and sometimes small, because there can be no worship of the infinite and the eternal. According to the third way of interpretation also, the passage, "Who are you? And whom do you invoke? What wonderful thing is this?" seems to us to be truly strange. Now, another thing may be said here. It is this: We admit that, although there is no "here or there" for Brahman, there is "here and there" for the Sādhaka; but when it is certain that Brahman is already at the place where you would invoke Him, why uselessly make the invocation at all? It is with the view to this objection that the Sādhaka, with spiritual perception, has, by an analogy, explained this matter of the invocation and appearance of the Devatā. "Air fills every place, but still, when the weather becomes oppressively hot, we say: 'Come, air! Come O life-giver!'" In the material Universe the air is admittedly all pervading; but when the terrible heat of summer almost kills us, who is it who does not piteously and from his heart say: "Come, air, come to us"? Why do people say this? Whence will air come? Air is everywhere. Had the movement of air been in fact stopped, would Jīvas have existed anywhere? A Jīva lives because there is air both within and without him, and because he breathes it into and out of himself. Why, then, invoke air, saying: "Come air, come"? When we look at the matter from the point of view of ourselves and not of the air, there is a sufficient reason for such invocation. The oppressive heat of fiery summer is scorching my mind and body; I feel then an acute necessity to invoke air. At such a moment, despite the universal presence of air, to me it seems to be in fact absent. It is not for respiration that I invoke air. I invoke the air to save me from the unbearable tortures of heat I suffer inwardly and outwardly—a work which cannot be accomplished by subtle air which has not taken on distinctive form. For this purpose we want the Wind-King, who moves on the breast of the Malaya Hill, robs the fragrance of sandal forests, soothes the burning of the Universe, and suppresses the rigours of summer. This is why, in spite of the universal presence of subtle air, I then ignore it and invoke the gross air, saying, "Come, air! Come, O life-giver!" And it is not merely a matter of words only; for, as a matter of fact, so long as this body of mine is not soothed by cool and refreshing waves of wind blowing strongly and with its sweet life-inspiring touches, I may search this entire vast Universe without finding anywhere the relief I seek. Similarly, although there is no reason, so far as She is concerned, for my invoking Her, there is ample reason, so far as I am concerned, for my doing so. I am a Jīva scorched by the fire of the three forms of sorrows.¹ My mind and life are constantly on the rack of the terrible troubles of the Samsāra. Suffering miserably under the influence of the poisonous

exhalations of the world, I cry day and night, "Save! save!" At such a time the fact of Her being everywhere does not remove my burning pains. And hence, in spite of Her residing in all things as formless substance to me Her presence seems Her absence; and, in spite of my knowing that Her substance is consciousness itself, Her presence with me does not satisfy me. I want Her whose presence will remove all my troubles. I am completely surrounded by the fearful huge fire of Samsāra, and have no way for escape. Scorched on all sides by the burning heat of this circle of fire, I, in despair, throw up my arms, and with heart-rending and deeply plaintive voice cry: "O Mother of the world! where art Thou? I die—I die! O merciful Mother, save me! Come, O Mother! Come, O Mother! Come, O Mother, Mother of mine!" Instantly, while these words are yet in my mouth, the Mother, the charmer of the heart of Bhairava, grieved on learning of Her son's sorrow, forsakes Her golden throne on Mount Kailāsa,² and, without even staying to arrange Her dress, hastens to and stands before me, extending Her ten fear-dispelling arms in all ten directions,³ and crying: "Fear not! fear not!" Then only will my sins, my diseases, my griefs, my troubles, and my pains be for ever at an end. My distress will not be relieved without the aid of this merciful and gross manifestation, even though I should possess the knowledge of Her subtle existence as the all-pervading Devī. Digambara has, therefore, said: "The Mother of the Universe pervades the Universe, but still, when I am overwhelmed with sorrow, I say: 'Come, O Brahmayi, save me!'" That the Mother of the world pervades the Universe is known to me as well as it is known to you; but knowledge alone without realization will not end our troubles. Hence, when we are overwhelmed with sorrow we say: "Come, O Brahmayi!" True it is that we invoke Her by saying, "Come," but we invoke⁴ the aspect of Her which governs all things, and not that in which She pervades all things.⁵

Rāy says: "You utter hymns in praise of Him who is the master of this Universe, after having offered Him all kinds of food. How incongruous this seems to me!" One is pleased if one gets a thing which one does not possess; but it seems highly incongruous to utter hymns in praise of Him whose infinite wealth consists of this entire Universe, after offering Him all kinds of food. The offerings belong to His Universe, and not to you. Who are you, then, to offer Him that which already belongs to Him? Before making a gift of a thing you must establish your right o

¹ Śiva.

² The abode of Śiva.

³ N., N.E., E., S.E., S., S.W., W., N.W., Above, and Below.

⁴ Vibhūti.

⁵ She is not invoked in Her gross manifestation.

ownership to it. If you proceed to establish your right of ownership to things which belong to Him, you will be in a manner liable to punishment on a charge of theft; so what you gain by your offering is the punishment for theft. It is in reply to this that Digambara has said: "In fact, meditation, knowledge, water, fruit, and all things belong to Her whom I worship with living and inanimate things." If one becomes liable to punishment of asserting one's own right to things belonging to Her, then we cannot avoid punishment; for we ought to have remembered it when we speak of "my wife, my son, my property, my family," and so forth, instead of only calling it to mind at the time of making offerings in worship.¹ What have you to call "your" in wife, son, house, and family? If, for the purpose of your own gratification, you can safely enjoy these things as your own, why should you object to my offering Her Her own things as though they were mine for Her gratification. The punishment for theft will be the same for you as for me; not only so, but my punishment for having made offerings to Her first and then partaken of it as Prasāda² will most probably be of a different nature from that which you will receive for having enjoyed yourself.³ Digambara has therefore said that, be it meditation, or knowledge, or water, or fruit, everything belongs to Her, whom we worship with living and inanimate things. Your body, senses, mind, meditation, knowledge, and all, are Hers. If She cannot be worshipped with offerings belonging to Her, how can one pray to Her at all by meditation with a mind belonging to Her, or sing songs in Her name with a voice which is Her possession? You call me a thief if I offer Her things which are Hers, but She whose things they are has said: "If a man enjoys the things given by Devas, such as gold, beasts, grains, and so forth, without first offering them to the Devas, he is a thief." Now say, brother, is it I who am a thief for having made my offering, or you, who are a thief for not having done so? It is true that this Universe is Hers, but have you and I realized it? Would anything have then remained as "mine"? Many people are very quick to understand, as a matter of mere knowledge, that the Universe is "Hers," but they find it extremely difficult to put this knowledge into practice. On that day on which I shall really understand that everything is "Hers" there will be an end of the phrase "my"

¹ A theme the author has in other places rightly enlarged upon. We hug dualism for our own purposes; it is only when we come to the question of worship that we conveniently seek to ignore it, and posit a philosophic monism which, though lying in our mouths, is at variance with all we do.

² Dedicated food.

³ That is, it being conceded that all things belong to Her, the offence is less if we first offer what is Her own, and then partake of that which we have acknowledged to be Her own, than if without such tribute and worship we take for our

Ah! how charming! This is truly the Devī's divine message in the heart of the devotee! "Finish the worship which you have resolved on. Your mental worship is done on your understanding that all things in the Universe are Mine. Now finish the outer worship which you have resolved on in the notion that it is yours." Lest you should say, "What I shall offer you in outer worship is also Thine," the Mother, who dwells in all hearts, has said by way of reply: "True, the infinite Universe is all mine but the wealth I have given you is your own."¹ From whose mouth but that of the Mother, can I expect such a simple reply in such sweet simple words? "Although the Infinite Universe is all Mine, the wealth I have given you—that is to say, the wealth in regard to which I have given you the sense of 'mineness'—is your own; for this sense of 'mineness,' which you have also, is My gift. Although the title to the substance of the thing is Mine, the title to its enjoyment is yours. To-day you offer this title of yours to Me, and in doing so you will finish your worship. Give Me, O father! the burden that is Mine, and be free from care yourself. Let Me to-day free you from all burdens by taking them on Myself." O Mountain King! this is the way in which is accomplished the worship of those who see with their eyes that all is Hers instead of merely babbling of it with their tongue. Blessed are you as a worshipper in this Samsāra! You are the best of those who have worshipped the Mother! You have said: "Under the influence of delusion people say 'My, my!' And who is it who lives in the household Āśrama² who is not deluded?" But we do not know if there was ever in this world an undeluded follower of the household Āśrama like you.³ Millions of great Yogīs have been unable to master, by means of their undeluded inner worship, what you have achieved in the household Āśrama, through deluded outer worship.⁴

Everyone in this world performs outer worship, but has the Treasure of the heart ever issued to console anyone as She has done for you? Full of Spirit,⁵ full of Brahman, and full of bliss, is my Mother. Although She is the presiding Devatā in the heart, She has come to receive your outer worship. To whose house does She thus come of Her own accord and with loving regard to grant success to the Sādhana of the Sādhaka, after

¹ Though not really so the Sādhaka's wealth appears to be his own, as it is the Devī Himself who is the cause of the delusion that it belongs to him. So long as the Sādhaka is under delusion the wealth is really his. What is the use of talking about it as "Her wealth" unless this is realized by dispelling the illusion?

² *Vide ante.*

³ Himālaya, the Devī's father.

⁴ "Deluded" is not here used in a condemnatory sense, but in the sense that it is dualistic, and like all which is such in a sense delusive.

having passed an anxious year ¹ in Her jewelled residence in Kailāsa, the seat of peace? Who is so fortunate in this Universe as to be able to place before himself the Devatā, full of Spirit, and of Brahman, residing in the heart, as a Devatā in visible form ² at the very beginning of worship? Who is so fortunate that She who is the treasure sought in Sādhana seeks from him outer worship of Her own accord? Not only have you ³ the glorious title of "Gaurī's Guru," ⁴ but you are the Guru of the whole world by reason of your having initiated it in the worship of Gaurī. It is on being initiated in the great Mantra of Gaurī's worship received from you that this Samsāra, consisting of moving and unmoving things, has to-day become entitled to the Durgā Pūjā festival. For this reason Durgā, the treasure acquired by you, through austere Sādhana is your Daughter, despite that She is the Mother of the Universe. Who has the power to worthily express the blessedness of the Mother? But O Mountain King, the prince of devotees! O Siddha King, the beloved father of Siddheśvarī! ⁵ Blessed, blessed, blessed are you to-day! and blessed are we, the inhabitants of the world, in that we have you for our maternal grandfather. Hence we say: "O Lord! we pray Thee to make the fountain of the love of your Daughter, the charmer of Śiva, to play for once in the desert of the hearts of those who are unblessed in the world through failure to understand this blessedness of Yours. Let high waves of the sweet cry of 'Mother' cool their burning, stony hearts, and may infinite streams of bliss flow to-day through the earth by the grace of its supporter." ⁶

It is with reference to the above-mentioned notions of delusion that Rāy ⁷ has said in another song:

"Whose are you? Who is yours? Whom do you call your own? It is a dream which you have seen in the sleep of great delusion." ⁸

Just as a man mistakes a rope for a snake, so this world, which is a compound of the five elements, is false. The immaculate ⁹ One alone being true.

At night all sorts of birds live happily on the same tree. When, however, morning comes, they all fly away to different places.

¹ In anxiety for her parents.

² Mūrtimayī.

³ Himālaya, the Devī's father.

⁴ Gaurī is the Devī. The Devī Purāṇa says: "She who was burned by the fire of Yoga was again born of Himālaya. As She has the colour of the conch, jasmine, and moon, She is called Gaurī." She is of a golden colour.

⁵ The Devī, as mistress of all Siddhi (success). Her father is Siddha, as the possessor of it.

⁶ The Mountain.

⁷ Rājā Rām Mohan Rāy.

of peace can I have than this Māyā? As people's dreams pass off the moment they receive medicine therein,¹ so if my dream of Māyā also passes off in consequence of my receiving the great remedy for the disease of existence, then I shall be blessed. If my practice of Sādhana on the dualistic understanding that She is the Mother and I am the son, She is the Master and I am the servant, secures for me Her grace, then of a surety I shall be able to float joyously on the bosom of the sea of monism, swimming in the waves of dualism.² As undecaying, immortal, and indestructible consciousness I shall flow on the current of devotion, instead of sinking in the unfathomable depth of liberation, and thus swimming through the sea of liberation I shall at length land on that shore which is the Feet of the Devī with dishevelled hair. Then waking, I shall see that my dream has really brought me to the shore of Kulakuṇḍalini,³ and that in consequence of receiving the great remedy for the disease of existence the sleep of existence has in truth passed away. Digambara has therefore said: It is well that you see a dream in sleep and do not awake again. Had you really woken, then that awaking would have been happy and peaceful. But what you call waking is only a play of wakefulness without awaking, and itself a bad dream. Real waking brings happiness and peace, whilst wakefulness without waking drives them away, producing want of peace, and the lamentation, "Alas! I am lost." Did all birds when leaving the trees do so for good and all, then the trees would have become birdless in a single day. Similarly, had all Jīvas passed away for good and all, the Samsāra would have ended in a single age.⁴ But just as birds fly away in the morning and return in the evening, so Jīvas pass away when they die and return when they are born again. Hence it follows that what you call transiency of the Samsāra is in a way nothing but its flowing permanence. Moreover, the constant coming and going to this and the next world gives news of the permanence and truth of the Samsāra. The Samsāra therefore is permanently permanent in spite of its transiency;⁵ and thought of the feet of Her whose substance is consciousness is the only permanent chain which binds me to this Samsāra. I love the permanent Samsāra always and with all my heart, lest monistic experience should unite the Mother and the son into one.⁶

¹ As where a person with an ailment dreams that medicine is given to him by some Devatā, which dream wakes him up; as, for instance, at the Śiva at Tārakeśvara.

² The motionless sea itself is monism, but the waves with which it is agitated are dualism.

³ The Devī presiding in the Mūlādhāra.

⁴ Yuga.

⁵ The world may be in flux, but the flux is a permanent thing.

⁶ The position here taken is that of the Bhakta or devotee, whose devotion can only find play in a dualistic world which is shattered on the attainment of

I cannot bear this Samsāra, for I am terribly afraid, lest falling under the charm of liberation I should loosen my hold of the Feet of the Mother with dishevelled hair. How can I when liberated rest satisfied unless I have the Mother, and can call upon Her ten times every half an hour: "Mother, O Mother! O Mother! Mother mine! O Umā! O Śyāmā! O Mother, Mother?"

This is why I say that even liberation is not more agreeable than being bound by the chain of the Mother's love. And Digambara has, therefore, said: "Thought of the Feet of Her whose substance is consciousness is the bondage of Samsāra."¹ As to the last few lines of Rāy's song, the naked (Digambara) Samsāra of Digambara² did not contain any of the things mentioned in them.³ So he did not care to give any reply to them.

Rāy has, again, said:

"Alas by whom have you been deluded, O mind? How unfortunate it is that you believe imagination to be truth!

You cannot give life to that which is under your control and yet desire to attain Him who is the life of the world.

Sometimes you give the image ornaments and sometimes good food.

At one time you establish it and at another destroy.

You make that dance before you,⁴ which, nevertheless, you believe to be your Lord. Who has ever seen so much folly anywhere in this Samsāra?"

Digambara replies:

"She, the Charmer of the world, has deluded the world with Māyā.

The Mother has revealed Herself, making imagination true.

On imagination is She established, in imagination I give Her life.

But this much I know, that truly do I offer myself to Her.

Sometimes I give Her ornaments and sometimes food. At one time

I establish Her and at another destroy.

I see Her as Mother dancing on the breast of Father, and in fear I say: O Thou who art all, save all!"

The Sādhaka will here notice what a great difference there is between the two. Rāy asks, "Alas! by whom have you been deluded, O mind?"

¹ *Vide ante.*

² There is a play on the word Digambara. The name also means "naked".

³ Digambara has answered the other lines of Rām Mohan Rāy, but not those at p. 632 about flowers, sandal paste, jewels, etc., which did not form part of his world, and about which therefore he did not trouble.

⁴ The Devī in some of Her forms appears as a dancer: one of the names of

Digambara replies: "Why mind alone? She, the Charmer of the world, has deluded the world with Māyā."

Do you think that you will escape being deluded by the Māyā of Her whose Māyā deludes the three worlds? Moreover, what you consider to be a folly in image-worship is also to be found in your worship of Samsāra.¹ If in spite of the worship of Samsāra being false you consider it to be true, why should you not consider the worship of images also to be true? While you yearn for the company of father, mother, wife, son, and so forth, despite the fact that your relationship with them is false, why should you not also consider Her company an event of singular good fortune for you?

Next, had it been my imagination which I believed to be the truth, then you might say that I was mistaken. But it is not so. This imagination is Hers, who has created the universe out of Her imagination. She has thus created wife and son, and we cannot forget them. How can we, then, forget the form² which She has created (or imagined)³ for Herself. Hence, while you say: "How unfortunate it is that you believe imagination to be the truth," we say: "Alas! what a pity that you consider truth to be imagination in relation to the domain of Sādhana only, and not in relation to the Samsāra also." This is a sign of great self-forgetfulness. You may, however, say: "Although the Samsāra is an imagination, an image does not appear to me to be as true as my parents." What matters it to anybody that it does not? What matters it to the sun that the owl does not see it? Moreover, had it been possible for us to see whenever one so wished, you might perhaps with some reason have said: "I do not see." But here, She whom I want to see must show Herself before I can see.⁴ Hence I do not wish to affirm of anything that it is true.⁵ But She, on Her side, gives reality to Her imagination (or creation) and presents Herself to view. What can you say to this? If it seems impossible to you that She who can give reality to such an imagination as is this vast and yet false universe can also (being Herself truth personified) give reality to Her own promise, then I have nothing more to say, for wonderful indeed is your knowledge of truth! As Her image is an imagination, so also is Her presidency therein. As the giving of life to the image is an imagination, so life also is an imagination; as the Samsāra is an imagination, so you and I also are an imagination; and, last of all, Her imagination (or creation) also is an imagination.

¹ That is, pursuit of worldly objects.

² Mūrti: image.

³ There is all along a play on the word Kalpanā, which means both "imagination" and "creation". Moreover, the creation is Īśvara's imagination.

⁴ He to whom She shows Herself can alone see.

⁵ Everything is in a sense untrue, but until this is realized it is idle to select

It is thus a pure futility to discuss the point. So long as the imagination (or creation) of the forms which you and I possess is true, so also is Her form, even though imagined by Her, yet, true, true, true. On the same day on which your "you-ness" and my "I-ness" will disappear, Her "She-ness" also will disappear. For the moment you had better consider yourself an imagination than call Her such. Hence I make that dance before me, which I believe to be my Lord (it is not I who cause the dancing).¹ I see Her as Mother dancing (of her own accord) on the breast of Father, and so in fear I say: "O Thou who art all, save all!" When I do not forget the multiple form of Her² who is all, what great sin have I committed that I should forget this form which is Herself in reality? Her form will ever remain an imagination³ to such men as do not know Her, but those who wish to see form and have faith in Her ever say: "The Mother has revealed Herself, making imagination true."

In another song Rāy says: "O mind! always do Sādhana of Him who, being without Guṇas,⁴ is the seat of Guṇas, and is without imagination." Digambara (the Sādhaka), the chosen son of Digambara (Śiva), at once says in reply: "Why, then, madman, do you do Sādhana of Him, if He is without Guṇas and without imagination?"⁵

We have not been able to find a subsequent verse in which another portion of Digambara's reply is contained. First of all Rāy says: "Always do Sādhana of Him." This Sādhana is not the Sādhana spoken of in the Śāstra. It is Rāy's own Sādhana. For, in one of the following lines he says that Siddhi and such other things "are fancies of the mind, impossible of achievement". (And yet he tells us that we are always to do Sādhana of Him!)⁶ Next he says: "Wonderfully is the universe made. See the work and believe in its Author. Know only that He exists, beyond thoughts." To this Digambara replies: "If you know only that He exists, why, then, do you sing songs? On whom do you meditate when closing your eyes, and whom do you think of?"⁷ Here Digambara has proved that there is no correspondence between Rāy's words and his actions. In another song Rāy says: "What an error it is (of yours),⁸

¹ Author's parenthesis; but She again it is who is the cause of that appearance of dancing to the Sādhaka.

² That is, the world.

³ That is, an unreality.

⁴ See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra sub voce* "Guṇa".

⁵ Without Kalpanā—the expression here means the same thing as Niṣkriya, or inaction.

⁶ Author's parenthesis. This is absurd, for Śāstrik Sādhana is done to obtain Siddhi, and Siddhi is the result of due Sādhana.

⁷ How can we think anything of that of which we know nothing, except that it is something which exists.

O mind! The eye does not see Him whom you wish to see. The ether surrounds the Universe. How is it that you consider Him to be like the ether who has made it so widespread? "

"What pains you are at to display Him who makes the sun, moon, and other planets to move constantly! And we want to feed Him who is higher than the highest, who gives food to men, birds, and creatures of the waters! "

He who does not see the fruits of a work calls it a folly. This is why Rāy has said, "What an error it is!" But he who has reaped its fruits has, with a clear vision, said: "It is not an error, it is not an error. Look there, look. There stands my Brahmayi shedding light in darkness. Under Her feet lies Maheśa, prostrate and unable to move. Hundreds of thousands of human arms form Her waist-chain. From Her eyes issue the fire of suns and moons. Her mouth utters the words 'fear not, fear not'. She sends forth peals of loud laughter. Fearful is She to look upon. The Heavens tremble. Victorious is She in battle. Free is the laugh She laughs with Her terrible mouth. The earth trembles under Her swan-like gait.¹ Keeping time, gracefully She dances, tāthai, tāthai." ²

In the course of his reply to another's words, Digambara has in this place given an account of his own work. Sādhana has here trampled on argument, and carried the Sādhaka to the visible temple of Siddheśvarī,³ and what it shows him there makes him speak incessantly words which depict his own thought, leaving him no leisure to reply to those of others. Just as, if a man meditates on some subject before he falls asleep an indistinct shadow of that subject falls on his dreams (even if the dream relates to a different matter), so the sky, the sun, and the moon, which had passed through Digambara's mind before he composed the song and was considering "Whether it is a mistake," appeared indistinctly along with the Virāṭa ⁴ form of the Mother of the World. Digambara was at that time lost in what he saw when he said, "Look there, look," or in what he saw before he said, "Look there, look."

A Sādhaka will here observe what a difference there is between Sādhana and philosophical reasoning—a difference as great as that between Heaven and Hell. Can the bubbles of philosophical and scientific reasoning attract the notice of him who has sunk into the play of the waves of the charming sweetness of the Charmer of the world? Ah, how sweet, how sweet? What an accomplishment in Sādhana! It is as if She who is life itself has thrown the gate of life open and plays before the eyes of the

¹ A waddling movement in women like that of a duck or swan is considered beautiful, for the swaying movements reveal the hips and their action.

² An onomatopœic word to denote the thud of dancing.

devotee, and the devoted Sādhaka, clapping his hands, fills himself with the sight and then shows it to the world, saying: "Look there, look at my Mother! Free is the laugh She is laughing with Her terrible mouth. The earth trembles under Her swan-like gait, and keeping time She is gracefully dancing, tāthai, tāthai."¹ Blessed Sādhaka, blessed are you! blessed is the earth with your blessing!

ĀDHYĀTMIKISM ²

We give a hundredfold praise to the community which suffers from the mental malady which makes them say that the Deity can have no form for having themselves afforded us the means by which they can be found out. But there is another class of interpreters who suffer from a contagious fever, whose mere touch is fatal, and who yet can by no means be so easily found out. These men have surpassed the two Ādhibhautik and Ādhi-daivik kingdoms and entered into the Ādhyātmik realm.³ Hence, whatever may be their practice, they are in speech advocates of Ādhyātmikism. To them even the visible Samsāra formed of the five elements is almost Ādhyātmik, not to speak of invisible abodes of the Devatās, Dharma, the next world, and so forth.

According to them, Vedas, Tantras, Purāṇas, Itihāsas,⁴ are allegorical; Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, are allegorical⁵ persons; and so are Prakṛti and Puruṣa, the ten Avatāras;⁶ the ten Mahāvidyās⁷ and all Devas and Devīs are all allegorical beings; Nārada and other Ṛṣis are allegorical persons; and so are Madhu, Kaiṭabha, Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Śumbha, Niśumbha, Mahiṣāsura, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarna, Kamsa, Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha,⁸ and others; the five Pāṇḍavas,⁹ Draupadī¹⁰ Duryodhana,¹¹ and others are allegorical persons; and so, too, are Vidyādhara,

¹ *Vide ante.*

² Ādhyātma and Ādhyātmika are adjectives meaning that which belongs or relates to the Ātmā or Self. When used with Jñāna or Vidyā it means the inner doctrine such as that taught by the Upaniṣads. Here the term is used in the sense of a mistaken over-subtlety, a false esotericism; a discovery of imaginary hidden meanings in plain statements, which it does not suit the "esoteric" interpreter to accept, and accordingly resort is had to allegory.

³ The author is here sarcastic, referring to the threefold divisions of the world, the Devas, and the self. They give the go-by to the two former, but suffer the pains of self-imagination.

⁴ Historical works.

⁵ Rūpaka.

⁶ The ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, as Matsya, Varāha, etc.

⁷ The ten great appearances (mūrti) of the Devī, as Kālī, Tārā Ṣoḍaśī, Chinnamastā, Dhūmāvatī, Bagalā, Bhairavī, Kamalā, Bhuvaneśvarī, Mātangī. See *ante*.

⁸ Various Asuras.

⁹ Sons of Pāṇḍu.

¹⁰ Their wife.

Kinnaras, Apsarās, Cāraṇas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas,¹ Rākṣas,² Bhūtas, Pretas,³ Piśācas,⁴ Daityas, and Dānavas⁵; the cities Kāśī, Kāñchi, Avanti, Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyā, Virajā, Dvāraka, Hastinā, the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, Svarga, Martya, Rasātala,⁶ are all allegorical things. Even the ascending generations above father and grandfather and the descendants grandson and great-grandson are allegorical. In short, whatever we actually see and touch is true, everything which is invisible is allegorical. We are told that fools who are unable to grasp the weighty, solemn, and hidden principles of the Śāstra, perform the Śrāddha⁷ of fourteen generations. But, as a matter of fact grandfather, great grandfather, and the like, have hidden Ādhyātmik or “scientific” meanings. For instance, the word Vamśa means a cluster of bamboos. Father, grandfather, and so forth, are each a pūra (link) of that bamboo. This is why they are called Pūrvapuruṣas (forefathers).⁸ The Āryan Śāstra enjoins that every year Śrāddha should be performed for them, and the Śāstra explains the word Śrāddha as whatever is given to Pitṛs out of Śrāddha or respect is called Śrāddha. We are, however, told that the injunction that Śrāddha should be performed every year for them means that every year a new cluster of bamboos should be planted round the house in a reverential spirit. Such men as have clusters of bamboos in their houses know this rule very well.⁹ This is the secret Ādhyātmik interpretation of the Śāstrik command, and this is why the Śāstra says that the Vamśas (lines of descendants) of those who annually perform Śrāddha for Pūrvapuruṣas never die out; that is to say, their houses never stand in want of bamboos, and so on. Similarly, we are to understand that all the rules and regulations contained in the Śāstra concerning worship and like matters are equally allegorical. That people do not understand them to be so, but take them in a different light, is due simply to the lack of discoverers of their hidden meanings or Ādhyātmik interpreters.

O Sādhaka! such matters as worship of Devas and Devīs have also interpretations similar to the interpretations of Śrāddha you have heard above. These interpretations are nowadays so widely preached to the public that we refrain from relating them here. In fact, just as when Bhagavān Rāmacandra, whose life was in Jānakī,¹⁰ had gone in pursuit

¹ Devayonis of various classes.

² Demoniac spirits.

³ Ghosts, spirits before the performance of the obsequial rites.

⁴ Demoniac spirit.

⁵ Enemies of the Devas.

⁶ The upper, earthly, and nether worlds.

⁷ Obsequial rites (see *post*).

⁸ Author's parenthesis.

⁹ This is, of course, all sarcasm.

of Mārīca, the horrible Rākṣasa Rāvaṇa appeared in the garb of a Brāhmaṇa practising austerities at the door of the cottage of the Mahālakṣmī¹ of the solar race on the pretext of begging alms; so these Dharmarākṣasas,² seeing that the Ārya society is nowadays equally masterless, helpless, and desolate, have slowly come forth in the garb of beggars and stood at the door of Dharmapravṛtti.³ By reason of the nature of the present age Bhagavān is at a great distance from us. Our only course of safety lies in keeping to the rules laid down by devoted seekers of the truth concerning Bhagavān. Dharmapravṛtti⁴ needs, therefore, to be loudly warned to-day lest Jānakī cross the circle drawn by Lakṣmaṇa about her. The present band of interpreters have undoubtedly the inner natures of Rākṣasas however much they may outwardly appear as ascetics. It is only until such time as they shall get the Dharmapravṛtti⁵ of the public completely in their power that they will continue to expound such sweet interpretations as: herdswomen means sensuous functions; ⁶ Śrī Kṛṣṇa means Ātmā; cloth means shame⁷; Kadamba tree⁸ means Śaṭcakra; ⁹ His blue colour is the sky! the hues of dawn are His yellow cloth; the rainbow is his charming diadem, and so on. Later on, when enticed by these apparently sweet interpretations, the Dharmapravṛtti⁵ of the public has said "Yea" to them, and stepped beyond the bonds prescribed for it,¹⁰ they will at once throw off this ascetic garb, and, revealing their frightful Rākṣasa aspect, say that "Śrī Kṛṣṇa" or "His līlā (play)" are unrealities, but that, in order to attract the minds of ignorant people, the authors of Śāstras have thus allegorically explained the (omnipresence) of formless Brahman.¹¹ Then, oppressed by the demoniac power of the Rākṣasas, our Dharmapravṛtti⁵ will be driven to the side of the sea. On the way it may

from the Rākṣasas' hands. We know that Bhagavān Hiraself is ever solicitous to rescue Dharmapravṛtti, which is the object of His love. But that is no reason why we should willingly invite danger. No one should find time or inclination to discuss the inferences and conclusions of such men. Whenever one meets them one should summarily dismiss them from the door, saying, "Begone!" Of course, if one thinks that a guest should not be dismissed without a gift, one may give him such as he deserves.¹

Whatever a man does is done with a motive. These people also have theirs. It is, however, amusing to see how they dare expose their beloved Simul cotton-fruit² to a violent storm—a fruit which, if but slightly touched, bursts into a hundred fragments before a thousand eyes. The Śāstra has, we are told, described the Devatā, the Devatā's play,³ and the seat of such play,³ allegorically; but has also told me that in order to see that holy place of pilgrimage of allegory I must travel 60,000 yojanas.⁴ I must, then, really waste this real body of mine to a skeleton for the allegorical Devatā, and for it I am called upon to say: "I must either accomplish my object or die in the attempt." The Ādhyātmik interpreter has, of course, explained all this in the Ādhyātmik fashion, but I am at a loss to make out how I can now give an Ādhyātmik interpretation of himself. If the facts are not real, but imaginary, was it right on the part of Bhagavān and the Ṛṣis who promulgated the Śāstra to delude the hearts of simple folks with allegorical falsities. The purpose of the Śāstra is to kindle the light of true knowledge in the hearts of men; and yet we are asked to say that it is that same Śāstra which throws the world into a deep, dark sea of delusion by its false histories! This same Śāstra ever befriends Jiva in

Its promulgators are He who, leaving Vaikuṇṭha, descended on the earth in order to save the three worlds; and they who, in spite of being masters of the eight forms of Siddhi ¹ by the force of Tapas, ² yet lived in dense forests, wearing plaited hair and barks of trees, walked upon the topmost heights of discernment ³ and dispassion, ⁴ and were full of mercy, which they shed unsought. They have said that it is true, true, thrice true: "True, true, true again; true, there is no doubt." If to those who, intending to serve mean selfish ends, call that firm truth falsehood, we give the credit of being truthful men, then who are to be counted liars in the world? It is also indeed curious that, while the Āyurveda, the Dhanurveda, the Gandharvaveda, ⁵ Astrology, and the Tantraśāstra which deals with Mantras, are not considered allegorical, only that section of the Vedas which deals with the worship is thought to be so. You are at liberty to think it allegorical, but when you become ill, why do you not explain medicine to be allegorical? Why do you not take the sun and moon as allegorical, and therefore light lamps at noon and bathe at night? The form of composition known as allegory is a thing to be understood and enjoyed; but in what poetical work have you read that it is also a thing to be practised? Does not your sinful tongue rend itself into a thousand parts when you say that the Maharṣis, ⁶ who, proficient in all Śāstras, penetrated the depths of Sādhana, lying beyond even the keen intelligence of philosophers, and who, attaining Siddhi in that Sādhana, disclosed superworldly Divine truths to men as if they were ordinary visible things, could yet not find out the allegory you discover, even although they could apprehend the Formless One?

explained away. One may kill a serpent without breaking one's stick.¹ Let the doctrine of the Deity, being possessed of form, be quietly abandoned, but in such a way that society may not be offended. This is the reason why we meet with so much unswerving faith in the Ādhyātmik principles; this is why Ādhyātmik interpretations of Śrīmadbhāgavata, Bhagavadgītā, Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, and other books have nowadays gone abroad and are being sold, distributed, and discussed in meetings held under the standard of Āryaśāstra; this is why hypocritical infidels are moving about the country preaching the irreligion² of Ādhyātmik interpretation under the pretence of preaching Dharma; this is why unsuspecting honest people who, having in good faith collected those sharp weapons with the notion that they were Śāstrik, are now being wounded with them. It is simply because they disguise themselves behind the name of Śāstra that these robbers in the field of Dharma get shelter from religious men. It is, however, good news that the time for appearance of the mercy of Her who is full of mercy for the poor has become ripe, and that almost everybody has now learnt the lesson of experience. Still, according to the rule that well-wishers should, out of love, reiterate an advice, even if it is already known, we say again: "Society, beware, beware!" It matters not whether you fear cholera, small-pox, and malaria or not; but whenever you meet an Ādhyātmik teacher, do not forget to make a profound bow and take leave of him in fear!

We shall most probably have to show in the course of our discussion of other topics later on how, why, and whence this system of Ādhyātmik interpretation has been evolved. For this reason we desist from further

CHAPTER XVII

OUTER WORSHIP ¹

THE Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: "The highest state is that in which the presence of Brahman is perceived in all things. The middle state is that of meditation. The lowest state is that of hymn and Japa,¹ and the state lower than the lowest is that of external worship.² Yoga is realization or the accomplishment of Unity between Jīva and Paramātmā. Worship is based on the twofold knowledge that He is Īśvara, and I am His servant but for him who has known that everything is Brahman there is neither Yoga nor worship."

The Niruttara Tantra says: "Mental worship is superior, and external worship is inferior. By worshipping Devatā a Sādhaka is himself honoured. Japa, without a doubt, leads to Siddhi in Mantra, and Homa leads to Siddhi in all things; for this reason a Sādhaka should perform all these three things—namely, Worship, Japa, and Homa. "O Kuleśvarī!³ Sādhakas following the Virācāra and Divyācāra ⁴ are competent for mental worship—that is to say, they alone are competent to perform mental without outer worship."

the very mention of it? To write Ka-Kha¹ in a primary school is no doubt the lowest stage in education, but do you think you will become a great Ṛṣi, proficient in all Śāstras, without having first acquired a knowledge of letters? If anyone has ever acquired proficiency in all Śāstras, it is because of his writing of Ka-Kha under the Guru-Mahāśaya.² Similarly, if anyone has ever acquired competence in spiritual knowledge, know that he has done so by virtue of external worship. It is true that the student leaves the primary school for the Tol³ or the college, but it is certain that he does not leave behind him Ka-Kha.⁴ When Ka-Kha has become firmly and indelibly impressed in their minds for all life, it is then that boys enter the boundless sea of Śāstra on the craft of that same Ka-Kha. Similarly, when, in course of the Sādhana of the lotus-feet of the Supreme Devatā in external worship in the primary school of the Supreme Guru, meditation and concentration become natural to a Sādhaka, it is then that he enters the sea of eternal knowledge and crosses to the other side of existence with the help of the craft of those fear-dispelling Feet. The relation between the Sādhana of Mahāvidyā⁵ and the worship of the Devatā, whose substance is the Mantra given by the Guru, is similar to that which exists between the cultivation⁶ of Vidyā⁷ and the writing of Ka-Kha under Guru-Mahāśaya. Whatever Śāstra you may attempt to learn, the Mantra of Ka-Kha will take you safely through all difficulty. However vast the sea of Śāstra may be, Ka-Kha will carry you across it. Similarly, however vast be the domain of Jñāna, Yoga, and Samādhi⁸ may be, the great Devatā, who is Mantra, will assume form, take you by the hand, and carry you across it. I shall see that the Mother, the Īśvarī

and beyond the end. Know that that which remains when all is gone is the Mother only. When there are none left to call the Mother "Mother," know that then, also, there will be the Mother only. For the Mother is my Mother as well as my son's Mother, my father's Mother, my mother's Mother, and even Her own Mother; so that when all else is lost, there will remain the Mother, the Mother, the Mother! When will that day come on which, losing all we possess, we ourselves shall be like corpses and see the Mother only?

Nowadays numbers of precedents and authorities are being collected for the abolition of external worship. Someone writing on the life of Rāmaprasāda¹ says: "Did he worship the earthen Kālī? Never." He said: "The fierce-visaged Devī in the temple of the heart-lotus," as if Rāmaprasāda's Kālī was never wont to issue from himself, or as if the Kālī of those who worship Her earthen image never appears in their heart-lotuses. The expression "earthen Kālī" itself is ridiculous,² brother critic! Even the earthen Kālī is of real worth; but it is a matter of lasting regret that being a man of flesh and bone you have become earthen and of no worth. We know not when Fortune will smile on you so that the Mother will show Herself in and through earth; when you will understand that although earth is earth, there is no lack of the Mother in it! Rāmaprasāda says: "Hundreds of true Vedas say that my Tārā is without form." Out of the thousand songs of Rāmaprasāda only this much has been quoted; not even one whole song, but only that portion of it in which the word "without form" occurs, as if Rāmaprasāda says on oath: "Everything else that I have said is falsehood; only the portion 'My Tārā is without form' is pure truth"; and, as if the following passages were mere raving

Her tresses are loosely flowing,
 Her body is splashed with blood;
 She shines like a freshly-formed cloud streaked with lightning!
 O who is that Charmer of mind—that Charmer of mind?
 Like a mass of molten lightning is She.
 Her beauty shines like gems and rubies.
 O who is that Charmer of mind?
 With a swaying gait, who comes there?
 Her tresses are loose, and She is stirred by wine,
 She moves fast in battle,
 Seizes those who surround me,¹
 Holds elephants in the hollow of Her hand;
 Ah! who is that Dark Lady coming there?
 Who is She, young and naked,
 And yet devoid of shame?
 She charms the world.
 What unseemly conduct for a lady of respectable family!
 Her gait is like that of an elephant,
 She is intoxicated with wine,²
 Her tongue is lolling,
 Her hair is loose,
 The sight of Her makes men and Devas fear Her.
 Roaring She crushes Dānavas.”³

O critic! wonderful indeed is the impartiality of your criticism! Rāma-
 prasāda during his lifetime was seldom heard to speak of the formless.

heart. The fear-dispelling look of the Blissful Devī dispelled the fear of existence. The dance of love of the Dancing Kālī opened the door of his heart. His body, tired with the overflowing bliss of love, began to lose all self-control. His eyes, closed with bliss, filled with tears; then it was that, bringing to an end his beloved Sādhana, the Sādhaka sang to his heart's content for the last time in his life to the ringing chords of his heart:

“ The black cloud rises in the sky within.
 With joy the mind-peacock ¹ dances and plays.
 The clouds, with rumbling sound, say, “ Fear not,”
 The soft smile of the bliss of love is like the beauty lightning
 therein.
 Fixed is the Sādhaka's gaze.
 From the eyes tears flow incessantly wherewith the thirst and fear
 of the heart-cātaka ² are soon removed.
 After this birth comes the next birth, and then many, many
 births.
 But Rāmāprasāda says: ‘ There will be no more births for him
 in the womb.’ ”

Notwithstanding his achievement he still hankered for the Mother. In fact, the certain knowledge that “ there will be no more birth in the womb ” increases such hankering a hundredfold; and then, feeling unbearable pain at the prospect of being separated from the sight of the Mother of the world, the Sādhaka, whose life was in the Mother, again fell at Her

O Tārā! when will the day come on which you will be without form? The day on which the heart-lotus will be fully blown and the mind's darkness will be dispelled.

Then I shall be beside myself, and falling on the earth, cry, "Tārā!"

On the day on which I shall forsake all distinctions and my mind's sorrow will be destroyed, on that day hundreds of true Vedas will say, "My Tārā is without form," and then only will the Vedic saying, "Tārā is without form," become true for me.

On the day on which this form of mine will vanish, on that same day my Tārā also will be formless. Tārā will not really be without form, but will be so for me. This is what Rāmaprasāda means to say, because it is the state of possession of form by me which leads to my worship of Her.

On the day on which this form of mine will vanish and I shall merge in Her great liberation aspect,¹ whose substance is consciousness, on that day, as I shall be without form, so my Tārā also will be without form. Then will be the due time for the realization of the truth that Tārā is without form, according to the teaching of the Veda; then, with the loss of power to perceive my own individuality, I shall also lose the power to perceive the Tārāhood of Tārā—that is, the fact that She is possessed of form or individuality.² If, therefore, there is any possibility of Tārā ever being to me without form, it will be on that day; but, so long as I possess my own individuality, or so long as I am I, my Tārā also is undoubtedly Tārā, possessed of form and Mother.

Now tell me, is Rāmaprasāda, called Tārā, possessed of form or formless? You want to quote the authority of Rāmaprasāda, but we are

how can you escape? In order to give a judgment as an umpire on any matter one must be careful to observe the strictest neutrality. How can the interest of the public be safe where your actions are guided by selfish motives? You who seek to establish that the Deity is without form! It is a nice question which you have raised; no one objects to it. But the question is, How is it that while out of a thousand songs you have picked out an expression which occurs only once in them, you have yet, out of those thousand songs containing thousands of references to the Deity possessing form, not selected a single one of such references? Of course, there is no doubt that that which possesses form is immensely heavier than that which is without form¹ and is a burden for most people. How can you alone bear the weight of Her whom all the inhabitants of the universe, composed of three worlds, have joined together in bearing for all time? As your body is fine, your mind is fine, and your worship is fine; so, by good fortune, the Devatā whom you worship is also fine, extremely fine—in fact, destitute of form. The weight of such a Devatā is enough for you; but still, in spite of the fact that you find the weight of a Devatā possessing form to be unbearable, you have not done well in suppressing the fact of the existence of that unbearable weight. If you could yourself raise it, you ought at least to have pointed out that, whilst Rāmaprasāda spoke a thousand times of the Devatā as possessing form, he only once spoke of the Devatā as being formless; but such a saying was not for you and I, or for even Rāmaprasāda himself. It was for the stage at which the individuality of Rāmaprasāda vanished, and the relation of worshipper and worshipped was past.

6 - D: "The Mathan dwells in all bodies. Blinded

it in me, and the name of this cause is misfortune. If, now, I can destroy this misfortune by doing such acts as bring good fortune, if, by the grace of Devatā, I get back my eyesight, then only I shall first see that the Mother is the destroyer of darkness even in the darkness, and next, being myself freed from all darkness, I shall see the Mother Herself fully. For, just as the Sun cannot be seen unless its power of dispelling darkness is seen, or a lamp cannot be seen unless its light is seen, or the lightning cannot be seen unless its flash is seen; so, despite the fact that the Mother is all Śaktis, She cannot be seen unless Her Śakti becomes manifest. She is eternal knowledge and bliss. Who can perceive Her omnipresence without the light of Her knowledge? True, the Mother is the destroyer of darkness, but then I am blind through the fault of my Karma. This darkness of mine is not from without; it is the inner darkness. The Sādhaka says I need not be afraid on this account, for just as this darkness is within, so are the sun and moon which will illumine it. She rises in the inmost recess of that which is within, so that that which is inner darkness in respect of the outer world is outer darkness in respect to Her who is within the inmost recess of the heart, and darkness flees afar from the fear-dispelling Śakti of Her refulgent rays. In order, therefore, to obtain the protection of the Mother of the world, whose glances are like infinite millions of suns and moons, we must leave the domain of darkness and attain the lunar region; and if one lives even in the darkness of Pātāla,¹ the rays of Her mercy make that region shine as though it were that of the moon. This is why, although you are blind within, you should know that even this "within" is without when compared with the place where She resides. This, too, is why, in

sees that Rāmaprasāda has to-day brought the Mother to the bank of the Ganges in order that he may throw himself away.¹

In order to bring the worldly play of the worldly Rāmaprasāda to an end, in order that She may take up to Her bosom Her most beloved child, and conclude with Dakṣiṇā² the worldly sacrifice of Her devoted son, Dakṣiṇā³ Herself has to-day appeared in the visible image. Even through that image, which has been abandoned by means of Mantra,⁴ Her inner advent has been revealed. The waves of light of Her whose substance is light have mingled with the waves of the Ganges, and with them have swelled the waves of the love of Rāmaprasāda, who has seen Vārāṇasī⁵ in water, on land, and in the heavens. "To him who dies in Kāśī,"⁵ Śiva says, "Thou art That. Above my 'Thou art That' is the Queen of Maheśa." "Why should I live in places of pilgrimage?"⁶ Many a Gayā, Gangā, and Vārāṇasī⁵ I shall see under Śyāmā's feet. What need have I for Kāśī?⁵ The lotus-feet of Kālī are the equal of innumerable places of pilgrimage." These old sayings have to-day become true.

"The day on which tears will stream from my eyes as I will cry, 'Tārā, Tārā, Tārā!'" "Presently I shall be beside myself, and, falling, roll on the earth, crying, 'Tārā!'" When such a day truly came, by the grace of the Mother who is the Saviour of the poor, the refulgent light of the black beauty of the cloud-like black Devī, the charmer of Kāla,⁷ made day and night one and the same. The three worlds sank in the playing waves of that beauty. The dark son of the dark youthful Mother at last reached the shore, which is the Mother's bosom, after having swum through the ocean of time. The child of Kālī, opening the temple of the heart and joining the mind to the Mother form without shaking the bank

how to bid the Mother depart by means of the Samhāra Mudrā ¹ after you had worshipped Her! and blessed art Thou, O Mother Bengal! Truly good teaching hast Thou given to Thy child. A marvellous teaching in the Mahāmantra of Mahāvidyā didst Thou impart to Rāmaprasāda by the grace of which even that which he earned ² in the work of throwing away the image became endless, wasteless, and unfailing both in this world and hereafter.

“To-day hundreds of thousands of the poor who walked the road in India enjoy as masters the spiritual wealth of these earnings of Rāmaprasāda. Victory to Thee, O Mother! Victory to Thy Prasāda!” ³

The Sādhaka will now understand in what way Rāmaprasāda's Tārā was formless. Rāmaprasāda called Tārā formless at a time and on a day when he himself was no longer Rāmaprasāda. At present it has become very easy to the community of Asuras ⁴ to call Tārā formless by taking up the note which Rāmaprasāda sounded at the time of his Samādhi ⁵ in Parabrahma. The very mention of the name of Tārā possessing form makes the hearts of Asuras tremble. Their community can find no rest unless Tārā becomes formless. Nevertheless, the precedent of Rāmaprasāda is not acceptable so long as one does not oneself realize the Videha Kaivalya ⁶ which Rāmaprasāda attained. Rāmaprasāda became himself formless immediately upon his calling Tārā formless, whilst the more these men cry out, “Without form! Without form!” day and night, the more do their own forms grow. What sort of formlessness is this?

While an effort is being made to prove that Rāmaprasāda's Tārā was without form, and that he did not believe in the Deity possessing

possessing form, but when he felt the approach of death he worshipped Kālī in an image possessing form, and on the next day died while preparing to throw away the worshipped image. If he did not believe in the Deity possessing form, was it through fear of death that he worshipped Kālī in the image? If so, the critic ought to have understood that, whether during our lifetime we believe or do not believe in the Deity possessing form, we should so believe at the time of death, since even such a man as Rāmaprasāda had to believe it then. It was only when Rāmaprasāda became fully enabled to feel an unembodied presence that he said only once and from his own standpoint: "My Tārā is without form." Ah! how charming! What an incomparable unfailing power does the love of Sādhana proceeding from the heart wield, so that, even when "without form," "Tārā is mine"! Despite being "without form," my Tārā is still "Tārā"! It is not the intention of the Sādhaka to say that the embodied character of Tārā will be lost in Her unembodied presence. He means: "My embodied Tārā will then drown me in the sea of Her unembodied presence. I shall lose my own self, and be completely merged in Hers." Just as a child sleeps in its mother's arms under the fold of her dress, so I shall be lost in the formless liberating¹ womb of my Mother who is possessed of form, and holds the infinite universe within Herself. Beyond this, in his state of Sādhana, he did not perceive this unembodied presence. On the contrary, he has distinctly stated that it is impossible for even Yogīs (not to speak of himself or common folk) to perceive an unembodied presence. Referring to that aspect of Devatā which is Mantra, Rāmaprasāda has said:

Veda says that Kaivalya is attained by worshipping the formless Deity.

To me, this notion seems wrong, and the effect of lightness of intellect.

Prasāda says the mind ever seeks the Black Beauty.

Do as Thou dost wish. Who wants Nirvāṇa? ”¹

At this point the critic opens the chest of his learning and intellect, and becomes senseless and restless with brimming joy on hearing the verse: “Veda says that Kaivalya is attained by worshipping the formless Deity.” The words, however, “Veda says that Kaivalya is attained by worshipping the formless Deity,” are not Rāmaprasāda’s. We have here merely a worthless vociferation of arrogant men wanting in all Sādhana. Rāmaprasāda has, in fact, protested against it, and said: “To me this notion seems wrong, the effects of lightness of intellect.” This portion only contains Rāmaprasāda’s own view. To those who say that there can be no liberation without absorption² in the formless Deity (why to them alone, to even Her who grants liberation?), Rāmaprasāda replies with a frown: “Prasāda says, the mind ever seeks the Black Beauty. Do as Thou dost wish. Who wants Nirvāṇa?” If Nirvāṇa liberation cannot be attained without a realization of Thy unembodied presence, never mind. What harm if it is not attained? Who wants Nirvāṇa liberation if he gets Thee? “Do as Thou dost wish.” Thou mayest or mayest not grant liberation. The mind, however, will not seek anything besides the Black Beauty. Those who eagerly seek their liberation without Her have no claim to Her boundless, infinite, unfathomable, deep, and pure love and devotion. This

For him who has meditated on Kālī,
 Death at Kāśī brings liberation.
 True this is Śiva's saying,
 But at the root of all is devotion,
 And liberation is its maid,
 What is gained by liberation?
 Water mingles with water.
 I love to eat sugar,
 But it is not good to become it.
 In amusement Prasāda says,
 By the strength of the merciful Devī,
 The fourfold fruit ¹ falls into the palms of him who contemplates
 the Devī with dishevelled hair."

Not merely the seeking of Nirvāṇa liberation, but even its attainment, is not desired. He has said: "I love to eat sugar, but it is not good to become it." If by becoming sugar itself I am unable to taste sugar, then why should I become sugar? Lest it should be replied that this is for the cessation of the sorrows of Samsāra, Rāmaprasāda at once retorts that in the realm in which he lives there is neither Samsāra nor sorrow. Let him who is burdened with sorrow seek its cessation. "Why shall we speak of liberation alone? The fourfold fruit ² falls into the palms of him who contemplates the Devī with dishevelled hair." Only he who has experienced it knows what it is to attain in meditation Her, the mere thought of whom brings unasked the fourfold fruit.

Another passage on which the critics lay stress is the verse: "But it is

discovered. O critic! can you for a single moment shake off your heinous and hellish malicious propensity and sit still? If so, I have one or two important questions to ask you. Rāmaprasāda has said: "But it is hard for even a Yogī to contemplate the formless aspect." What does he mean when he says this, and to what class of worshippers does he refer? Are you able to understand it? The havoc you have made of Rāmaprasāda's song surpasses description. We shall demonstrate in detail that in the sphere of religion the preaching of a doctrine which it is not in our competence to practise is nothing but a form of covert robbery.

"All Jīvas meditate on the Guru in the Brahmarandhra,¹

And Sadāśiva is a great Yogī through meditation on the form
of Kālī.

Truly the fifty letters form the substance of Veda and Āgama,

But it is hard for even a Yogī to contemplate the formless aspect.

Thou hast no form, Akṣara² is Thy form.

O Thou whose substance is the Guṇas! Thou hast taken forms
according to different Guṇas."

Have you understood the meaning of the above? If you had, you would not have made such a mess of it. "All Jīvas meditate on the Guru in the Brahmarandhra.¹ And Sadāśiva is a great Yogī by meditation on the form of Kālī." In order to understand this, it is necessary to become initiated and instructed according to Śāstra by a Guru. "Truly the fifty letters form the substance of Veda and Āgama, but it is hard for even a Yogī to contemplate the formless aspect." It will be many ages³ before you can understand the "but" between these two hemistiches. This

Himself that this truth ¹ must not be revealed to those who are not competent to receive it. Hence, although Rāmaprasāda's song is in the form of a Sūtra, we cannot scatter abroad its Vṛti, ² Bhāṣya, ² and Tikā ² in the market, the public bathing-place, and the fields. This much, however, we tell you: Why do you make yourself ridiculous in the world of Sādhakas, and bring ruin on the ignorant community by interfering (though you have no competence for Sādhana) in matters ¹ which can be understood by Sādhana alone, and which, without Sādhana, cannot be realized by purely intellectual effort, however strenuous it be?

Rāmaprasāda was a seeker of ³ the supreme object, ⁴ and the critic seeks his selfish ends. The one is nectar, and the other poison; the one is heaven, ⁵ and the other hell. ⁶ How dare you desire to mix the two together? Covertly you have expressed your regret. "If only Rāmaprasāda in his Sādhana had worked along the right path from the very beginning!" Oh the arrogance of it befitting an Asura! Is it because you have seen your own face in the mirror that you have come to think that Rāmaprasāda was a Jīva from his birth blind, uninitiated, puzzled out of his wits, straying in a wrong path, and devoid of knowledge of the Śāstra? Being a trader in Rāmaprasāda's name, and partaker of the leavings of his food, how dare you presume to show Rāmaprasāda the right path of Sādhana? You are seeking a means of livelihood for yourself in the Samsāra. Continue to seek that. Why trespass on Sādhana lying hidden in the womb of Śāstra? You have been attacked with the disease of formlessness; you may take a leap into the air; but why such braggadocio on your part, since Rāmaprasāda himself was not so diseased? The end of your Sādhana

it is well known." Brahman is undefinable, because its real aspect cannot be given any particular definition. In fact, it is because the name of the Deity possessing form does not strike such terror in the heart of Brahman as it does in those of the community who are the standard-bearers of the Formless Brahman that worshippers of the Deity possessing form can entertain no malice against the Formless. However that may be, whether Rāmaprasāda was a worshipper of the Formless or of the Deity possessing form, we have no desire to hear from the mouth of a dealer in ginger information about ships.¹

Rāmaprasāda was not an African, European, or American. His life's play began and ended in Bengal. We are his neighbours. If men, whether at home or abroad, want to hear of him, they must come to us for it. We shall never go to anybody else to learn about him. The chief part of Rāmaprasāda's Sādhana did not consist of singing in bands to the accompaniment of musical instruments, as is the case with the weekly-praying community.² He sank into the depths of the ocean of Sādhana, and it was only at intervals of rest from Sādhana performed in fixed Āsanās³ that he was now and then moved by the breeze of emotion to sing his songs. To-day the miserable plight of the band of critics is due to their having fallen into the waves of this ocean in which they helplessly struggle. Proofs of Rāmaprasāda's Śavasādhana, Citāsādhana, Śaktisādhana, rosary of Mahāśaṅkha, Bilvamūla, and Pañcamuṇḍa, and other Āsaṇās,⁴ we still possess. The community of Sādhakas is still resounding with the deep trumpet sound echoing from the sphere of spiritual competence in which Rāmaprasāda moved, and of the truth⁵ for which he bore a madly

the name of Śiva. Can one who does not follow the command of Śiva in practice presume to say anything of authority in the name of Śiva? Not to believe Śiva, not to believe in Śāstra, not to believe in Guru, not to believe in Sādhana, and not to believe in the Devatā who is the object of Sādhana, but to believe in Rāmaprasāda and his songs set to music! not to believe in Devatā, and yet to be mortally afraid of Her as if She were some wandering spirit; ¹ to cut the root, and then to pour water on it—such was not the art which Rāmaprasāda had learnt. It was because Rāmaprasāda served the Śāstra with bowed head and worked according to its dictates that the superworldly Śakti of Siddhi of which the Śāstra speaks attended him constantly.

In another song Rāmaprasāda says:

“O mind! you are still labouring under this error ²

You do not clearly realize what Kālī is.

Although you know, why do you, O mind! seem not to know
that the universe, consisting of three worlds, is the Mother's
image?

And you want to worship Her by building images of clay!

The Mother who decks the three worlds with measureless gems
and gold.

Her you want to deck with worthless tinsel ornaments!—the
Mother who feeds the world with all kinds of food.

With what face do you think to feed Her on Ātapa rice ³ and
soaked peas? ” ⁴

And so on.

False knowledge, which is not knowledge, is the cause of all error.

She shall be adorned, we shall show later. Here we say this much, that a person who proceeds to perform Sādhana is bound to satisfy his heart's desire by adorning the Mother. It is the duty of all Sādhakas, male and female. When the heart is immersed in the depths¹ of Sādhana, that which these depths are overpowers, according to a law of Nature, the Brahmatattva of the Mother of the world.² To conquer that unconquered power of the Sādhana, even She Herself, who is unconquerable, often feigns Herself to be incompetent.

Sinking in the sweetness of the Creatrix's play of love for Her devotees, Dāśarathi, great depicter of sentiment,³ has, in picturing the love of the Mother of the world, well displayed this in his poem entitled Āgamani.⁴ When, for the sake of the Sādhana, which was the Durgāpūjā festival of the Prince of devotees, the Mountain-King, his Daughter appeared as the Destroyer of Maṇiṣa, and stood in the courtyard in front of his Maṇḍapa⁵ on the evening of the sixth lunar day; when Menakā his Queen, whose life was in Umā,⁶ ran out with joy to welcome Her at the report of Her coming; and when startled and made afraid by the sight of Her martial appearance, the great Sādhikā⁷ of the Daughter⁸ lost herself at view of this other form⁹—then, on her, Mother Mahāmāyā, the daughter of old,¹⁰ cast Māyā and assumed a form of surpassing beauty.

SONG

“She appeared as Gaurī, the Two-armed daughter of Mountain,
Mother of Gaṇeśa.

Daughter of the Mountain-King¹¹ with the graceful gait of an

The beauty of the moon-faced Umā surpasses that of a million moons.

Ten moons shone on the nails of the Mother's feet.

Seeing this, the moon in the sky pales through shame.

Yet, can She be compared to the moon; She, at whose feet the moons roll?

In Autumn, in the Himālayas, it was like a fair of autumnal moons.
In receiving the moon-faced Umā, the Queen took, as it were,
the moon in her hand.

Behind Umā's family of moons¹ the moon in the sky was concealed.

With Her moonlike mouth the moon-faced Devī called out,
'Mother!'

The Queen replied:² 'Is it you, O Durgā! the Dispeller of sorrows?

With weeping, O Tārā, Mother! I have lost the pupils (Tārā) of my eyes.

O Umā! to what a plight have I come since last I bid farewell to Thee!

O Mother! my body remains in the Himālayas and my life in Kailāsa.³

In Thy absence I lie on the earth as one who is dead.

To-day Thou hast brought life to my body, and with it speech.

O Mother! how is it that Thou dost not remember that Thou hast a mother?

If Thy mother dies sorrowing for Thee, Thou wilt incur the sin

'When did you, O Mother! seek me? Whose father is a King
and whose Mother is a Queen,

What if Her husband has, perchance, become a Sannyāsi?

The bitter words of women kill me with shame.

We hear them say Thou art a King's daughter, but has Thou
no Mother?

Father is of stone and so are you, O Mother!

But I cannot conquer my love for you,¹ and so I have come of
My own accord.'

The Queen replied: 'O Lady of Īśāna! true it is that I am stone,
And, O Mother! for Her² whose daughter Thou art, it was best
to be of stone.'³

Saying this the Spouse of mountain⁴ greatly wept, and in plaintive
words again addressed her Daughter:

'As the motionless mountain is My husband, how can I get news
of you?'

O gracious Devī! I pray Thee forgive my offence on that account.
Many are the people, O Umā! who before me call Thee miserable,
and as I hear them my mind burns with fire.

They say to me, O Queen! your Daughter, a tendril of gold, has
become pale.

Destroyer of Tripura⁵ lives by begging.

Beloved Umā is my only treasure, the treasure of worship.

I want to keep my Son-in-law in my house, but Trilochana⁶ is
not willing that I should do so.

O Mother! in the world it is by My Husband's riches that people become rich.

Whoever with devotion begs of My Husband, to Him does Trilochana ¹ give the wealth of liberation at a glance.

He is in want of nothing; but such is His nature that He yet behaves like some poor helpless man.

He who grasps the meaning ² of this is filled with feeling, ² and is saved from the cares of existence.

Will your riches make your Daughter and Son-in-law rich?

Do you want to give riches to Her who holds the Universe in Her womb?

Can He be poor in whose house your Daughter lives?

As Annapūrṇā I give food to the world,

And the Ocean, Kubera ³ and others guard the wealth of Śiva.

How great, O Mother! must have been the religious merit ⁴ you have earned

That you were able to give your Daughter to Him!

Such is the power of My Husband that I can make you Indrāṇī, ⁵

I am such a Daughter of yours as is equal to ten sons.

It is out of jealousy that neighbours do not speak to you of happiness,

But wound you, O Mother! by speaking of sorrow.

The Queen said: ' O Brahmamayī! explain this to me.

If Thou hast so much wealth, where is the sign of it?

O Śaṅkarī! ⁶ does not Śiva's heart yearn to adorn Thee?

Tāriṇī,¹ Thou art My crest-gem. Do gems become Thee?

Will the moon look bright if gems are placed on it?

My simple dress ever charms Āsutoṣa's² mind,

And what Pañcānana³ desires that I do.

If this were not so, innumerable and priceless jewels would lie in the dust before Me.'

The Queen said: 'Why should not ornaments become Thee?

Ivory, when set in gold, becomes more beautiful.

To-day I shall bring all kinds of jewels and see with my own eyes

Whether, O Īṣaṇī! they become Thee or not.'

Then in joy of love the Queen of Mountain brought jewelled ornaments,

And put them with care on Umā-jewel.

Never, however, can ornaments look well on Umā's body;

She became like the moon in the grasp of Rāhu.⁴

In grief the Queen became, as it were, dead, and stopped the maids,

Saying: 'Do not bring worthless ornaments any more,

And quickly take off those which I have already put on Umā.

Let me see the unadorned body of the Mother.

They do not become Thee, O Mother Śaṅkarī! Ornaments do not become Thee!'

What Providence⁵ is it which has made Thee, O Mother! Spouse of Hara?⁶

How beautiful Thou art, O Tārā! O Tārā, with face like the

provision for Her adornment. On that day on which She sees that I am tired out, discomfited, and put to shame in my efforts to adorn Her, the merciful Tripurasundarī will, in order to end this trouble of Her son, adorn Herself with Her own beauty, and of Her own accord take Her seat on the throne of my heart. On the day on which when going to adorn the Mother with my ornaments, I shall myself be adorned with Her ornaments, on that day, my yearning to adorn Her will end for good and all. Then I shall throw up my arms in joy and call out to the world to see how, although all efforts to adorn the Mother fail, he who makes the efforts is himself adorned by virtue of the religious merit¹ he thereby acquires. Rāmaprasāda has also told us what sort of an eye is required to be able to perceive the beauty and sweetness of that adornment. We shall try elsewhere to make this clear. Here we would say that, whether it suits the Mother or not, I shall adorn the Mother if my own condition requires it, for the Mother is as much my Mother as She is the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. The Mother's mother, Menakā, proceeded to adorn the Mother because it suited her to do so, irrespective as to whether it suited Umā or not. But because Menakā thought the ornaments which were suitable for her to be also suitable for the Mother, the Mother refused to be adorned with her ornaments (vanity),² and stood forth adorned with such ornaments only as properly belonged to the Mother. And then the divine³ beauty of Menakā sank in⁴ the sea of the indescribable beauty of Brahmamayī Umā. Then, throwing off the ornaments, consisting of the darkness of the vanity of individual existence, Menakā herself shone with the light of the Sun of the sole existence of the Mother of the world, and

of that yearning, and led him to say: "Ah! you want to adorn Her with worthless tinsel ornaments." This does not mean that "the Mother need not be adorned." The burden of the song of his sorrow was that he had not ornaments suitable for the adornment of the Mother. This must be so; for is there any such luckless son in the world as yearns to call the Mother Mother and yet has no desire to adorn Her?

"The Mother who feeds the world with all kinds of food.

With what face do you want to feed Her on Ātapa¹ rice and soaked peas?"

He who can adorn others can also be adorned himself. He who can feed others can also be fed himself.² He who desires to adorn others may also desire to be adorned himself. He who desires to feed others may also have the wish to eat himself. Either say at once that the Devī neither adorns others nor is adorned Herself, neither feeds others nor eats Herself; or say that She both adorns others and is adorned Herself; both feeds others and Herself eats. Even if She is not, according to you, Herself adorned in Her aspect with form, yet in the formless aspect at least, as you understand and speak of it, She appears undoubtedly to adorn others. If so, how do you escape from the difficulty? All Śāstras and all people agree that the Formless aspect is eternally attributeless, and that it is impossible for that attributeless aspect to have the desire (which is itself an attribute) to adorn the world; but, then, such is the virtue of the nineteenth century that nowadays we frequently hear of a Formless Deity with attributes. We, however, understand this attribute to be an attribute³ of the worshippers of the Formless Deity instead of being really an attribute of the Formless Deity, for to admit that the Formless Deity has attributes is to admit that the Formless Deity is not Formless.

difficult for them to show their faces to worshippers of the Deity in His aspect with form, for in order to possess attributes it is necessary to possess form; consequently, they have denied perfect attributeness (that part of it which necessitates the possession of form) ¹ and present to view a queer sort of Brahman, half of which is with attributes and the other attributeless. Formless, yet with attributes; with attributes, yet formless. This Brahman of theirs is called "existence, consciousness, and bliss," ² after the Śāstra; ³ "Merciful Father," after the Bible; "Creator" (Kartā) and "Lord" (Īśvara), after the Koran; and the "Formless One," through the malice which non-Āryas bear against Āryas; and He is also called "full of love" at times for the attainment of their selfish ends. Because they will not allow their Brahman to be identified with the Devatā whom Āryas worship, it has (despite its being, in fact, above name and form) ⁴ name, though not form, ⁵ otherwise how can It be constantly addressed with the exclamation "O!"? However that may be, even if this newly discovered Formless Brahman without attributes suits their purpose, we are ourselves in no wise bound to admit the existence of this novel appearance. ⁶ We care very little for the Attributeless Brahman if He does not appear with form, and much less do we like this Formless One with attributes.

Who says that She who can feed others, as She can adorn others, cannot or will not Herself eat? ⁷ If the will of Her who is will itself eternally exists, that will has as much relation to feeding as to eating. ⁸ If you say that it is impossible for Her to eat, we shall say that it is also impossible for Her to feed. If you admit the possibility of feeding, why should you not admit the possibility of eating? You may say She feeds the world,

Can anything be said after this? Here, once for all, is the most final decision which the matter admits of! For these people think (in consonance with their mental trend) ¹ that it is utterly false that She eats or will eat, the only essential truth being that She feeds!

If the Mother cannot be fed simply because She feeds the world, the reason for such inability is that if I want to feed Her She would demand repayment by me for all the food which She supplies to the world,² for you ask yourself how much She who feeds the world can Herself eat. I say She may feed the world as much as She likes. What have I to do with that? I am bound to give Her only what She gives me to eat.

My gratification will be in giving to Her the enjoyment ³ with which She has provided me and then retiring. I am not here to make payment of all Her dues. My responsibility is to pay Her only such dues as I owe Her. She is Brahman only so long as I am Jiva. She is Mother only so long as I am son. She is a Devatā only so long as I am a man, and my worship of Her lasts only so long as I am "I." My worship of Her will be at an end the very day on which my "I-ness" will be at an end, or my individuality will disappear the very day on which my worship of Her will come to a close. So long as I shall have to eat Ātapa rice ⁴ and soaked peas, what justification have I for eating them without offering them to Her?

Although She is the Mother of the world, She is also my Mother. Although She is Bhagavān of the Universe, She is also my Lord.⁵ "The food which I shall eat, even that food I must offer to Pitṛs and Devas." What I shall eat even that my Iṣṭadevatā will partake of before me. Had

His protection), would He have been called throughout the three worlds by the glorious name of "Friend of Pāṇḍavas"? Had not Bhagavān, in spite of His being the Master of infinite universes and Lord of Vaikuṇṭha,¹ assumed the form of young Gopāla on being moved thereto by the great devotion of Prahlaḍa, and taken with His own hand the plate of poisoned food from the hand of Prahlaḍa, who was grieved to give it to Him; and had He not put that food with the fingers of His own lotus-hand into His fair mouth, which is wont to drink nectar² given by Brahmā and other Devas, would He have been known by the beloved title of "Hari of Prahlaḍa," in spite of His being the Hari of the world? Had He not joyously taken in the hollow of His hand the grains of rice given by the wife (a devoted Sādhikā)³ of the poor and destitute Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā and tasted their sweetness, greater than the sweetness of nectar, singing the greatness of love, would anybody in this world have called Him Friend of the Poor and Merciful Bhagavān? Had not the Providence⁴ who dispenses the four-fold fruit to Jīva considered sweet the fruits half-eaten by herd-boys, would the sweetness of the name "The joy of Nanda"⁵ have been so much greater than that of "Sacchidānanda"⁶? Had not the Mother, the Genetrix of Brahmā and other Devas, left Her bejewelled throne in the luminously resplendent region of Kailāsa⁷ and gone to the thatched hut of Kālaketu,⁸ the hunter's son, illuminating the house and the surrounding woods with the light of Her beauty; had She not proved the fitness of Her name "Caṇḍī" by giving the Caṇḍāla's⁹ son a place on the fair lap which is ever sought by Guha and Gajānana;¹⁰ if Annapūrṇā,¹¹ Charmer of the mind of Kālā,¹² had not blessed Kālaketu by feeding him from the breast which even Brahmā and other Devas hardly gain, and eaten the food of a

accepting, in the woods on the bank of a river, their worship with fruits and roots and offerings of blood issuing from their pierced hearts,¹ would Sādhakas have staked their lives in their determination to perform Sādhana of the Mother? Both Śāstra and report say that Mahārājā Suratha and Samādhi the Vaiśya King, whose life was itself a great Samādhi,² after establishing the Mother in an earthen image daily for three years, inflicted cuts upon their breasts with swords, and with the blood issuing therefrom made offering in the great worship, that by such intense devotion³ they might speedily get sight of Her.

This puts me in mind of something. The cutting of his own breast by a son in the worship of the Mother cannot be a favour of the Mother. And why being Mother should She be so cruel? In my opinion, however, Suratha and Samādhi did not cut themselves to their hearts in order that by satisfying Her with such a sacrifice the Mother might appear before them. They had heard from their Gurudeva, Mahārṣi Medhasa, that the Mother dwelt and played in the hearts of devotees. Hence they took the terrible determination "to see Her by bringing Her out from their hearts by importuning, if not by satisfying, Her." And with such intention they inflicted sword-cuts upon themselves. Otherwise, what was the necessity for so intense a form of devotion?⁴ People may call the blood which issued from their hearts their heart's blood, but I say that it was not merely the blood of the heart, but also attachment. And because this was so, blood flowed from the hearts of the Mother's devotees, brimming with love for the Mother. The moment such hearts were pierced, streams of love flowed copiously from them. But that love is transparent, fair, pure, unsoiled, thick, deep and milk-white. How, then, did it become

offered his body, senses, heart, Ātmā, and all he possessed at Her feet, what was the necessity of re-offering that heart again and again to satisfy Her? The sea, despite its depth, is full of waves. Similarly, notwithstanding that love is ever deep, it is constantly restless. Such restlessness is its natural characteristic. To Him whom I love with all my heart, and to whose feet I have offered my all, to Him, nevertheless, I desire to offer it again and again, ten times every half an hour.

I know not whether it is a quality of love or of its object, whether of the devotee or of the beauteous feet of the Mother. But it is a fact, that as often as Suratha and Samādhi, urged by such restlessness, struck their hearts, so often did the Mother of the world move Her feet to let them know that She was awake, and gave clear evidence thereof in ripples of blood raised thereby. At last, fearing lest Maheśvara should take it to heart were all the dye so lovingly and carefully applied by Him washed off (lest Śiva's words should prove false by the pain caused to the heart of the devoted Sādhakas were their constant offering of attachment to Her spurned and rejected),¹ the Daughter of mountain left that comfortable couch and showed Herself to the Sādhaka by awaking, as one who is consciousness, in the earthen image, the beauty of which gave joy to their eyes. She showed Herself in a manner as if She knew nothing of all that had happened theretofore. Her heavy and indolent eyes, like those of one who has suddenly awakened from sleep, were stirred by a Mother's love, soothing the hearts of the devotees by shedding upon them the nectar of Her serene regard; and smiling softly with Her ruddy lips, She said to Suratha, "Mahārājā, take what you like," and to the Vaiśya also, "Gladdener of Kula (Kulanandana),² take what you like." Ah, how

the want of want. Just as She has no want of "ātapa rice and soaked peas," so also She has no want to sweet-meats, sweet-rice,¹ and nectar.² What cause for sorrow or shame is there, then, in offering Her "ātapa rice and soaked peas?" To Her the store of nectar² churned out of the seven seas is as much an atom as "ātapa rice and soaked peas" are atoms.³ She is as much unattached to ātapa rice and soaked peas as to nectar.² Although She is really as free from attachment as the water on a lotus-leaf, when playing at the play of Samsāra, full of Māyā, She, in order to draw devotees to Herself, merely pretends to be delighted by the receipt of all these materials. Otherwise, what form of delight does the Devī, who is all delight and perfect delight, want that She should feel delight in receiving offerings of food.⁴

It is ridiculous to think that offerings of food will give delight to the Ānandamayī,⁵ who is present in every atom of those offerings as consciousness.⁶ Her delight and joy of which the Śāstra speaks in dealing with the subject of worship are not Her delight and Her joy, but the play of the delight of Sādhana and the joy of Sādhana in the Sādhaka. We shall try to explain this point more clearly in its proper place. Here only we would observe that Rāmaprasāda sang the story of His heart with a mind full of sorrow, a sorrow which attacks every Sādhaka so long as the supreme

can have room ¹ to digest the food left by Rāmaprasāda. It is during life that evidence of men's Sādhana is seen. But Rāmaprasāda gave evidence of his Sādhana in death as well as in life. By performing worship the night preceding his death, and placing the Mother's image before him even at the time of death, the high-souled accomplished Sādhaka has given us full proof of his faith in Brahman with form,² and of his performance of worship of the Deity with form.³ During life the Mother with form ⁴ danced constantly in his songs and his heart. If after this a man can find it in himself to say that "Rāmaprasāda did not worship the Deity with form," he may as well also say that Rāmaprasāda had no soul.⁵

We shall quote here another of Rāmaprasāda's songs of self-resignation. In this it will be seen how even his body and senses, not to speak of his mind, heart, and very self,⁶ were absorbed in the worship of the Mother.

"Of what use, O brother! is this body if it does not melt in love for Dakṣiṇā? ⁷

Oh, fie, fie, to this tongue if it does not utter the name of Kālī.

Those eyes are sinful which see not the form ⁸ of Kālī.

Oh, how wicked is the mind which does not sink under Her feet.

May thunder strike those ears which do not hear Her sweet name, making copious tears flow from the eyes. For what purpose does their existence serve?

Oh, should we desire to have the hands which fill the belly, if they are not joined together to hold sandal paste, Javā flowers, and bael-leaves? ⁹

Oh, of what use are the feet, and wholly without purpose is the

How can I understand the meaning of this—born though I am in a Brāhmaṇa family?

In order to uphold the honour of a devotee, Bhagavān, who is in the power of devotees, took His own place below, and raised the devotee on high.

If the devotee falls, it will be difficult to save him.

This was why the Lover of devotees sat at the root of the tree, in order that he might hold the devotee in His arms.

O hunter! in order to bow to you to-day it is necessary to cross the Lord of the Universe.¹

I therefore bow to your feet, O Caṇḍāla! from a distance.

Bless me, O Niṣāda-King! that I may to-day lose my Brāhmaṇa-hood.

And, making me your younger brother, give me, O brother! a place in Mother Caṇḍī's bosom.

You have, O brother! taken me up on the tree of Kula.² If I now fall, there will be an end of me.

In the name of Śiva, in the name of Śiva, I stretch out my hand. Raise me to you."

Because such fall is inevitable in human life, the Three-eyed Bhagavān, who peers through the three divisions of time,³ has, with a view to the cause of this fall, warned the world of Sādhakas beforehand, and Himself said in the Yoginī Tantra: ⁴

"Many celestial ⁵ and terrestrial obstacles appear in pilgrimage, construction of palaces, and specially at the beginning of any religious act,

should be considered as restraining obstacles in a different form; otherwise, an inclination ¹ which instigates work would never have been called an obstacle by the Śāstra. Such instigating inclinations are merely ropes from which swing cradles of doubt. Description of obstacles follows:)

“ Thought of sinful objects, whether they are near or very far off, be the distance a thousand or hundred thousand of yojanas; ² detriment to religious work through laziness, grief, delusion, old age, and disease, which destroys youth and wealth (4, 5); quarrel with wife; famine; home difficulties (quarrels with relations, quarrels with members of family, and so forth); anxiety on account of many Vratas ³” (undertaking many Vratas at one and the same time, and then being anxious for fear of occurrence of omissions in their performance); “ the vanity that ‘ I am a righteous man ’ (6); sudden subjection to grief, in spite of the absence of the occurrence of any sin ⁴ during the performance of a religious rite; the occurrence at the sight of Devatā Himself and His manifestations ⁵ of such perverse ideas as that Tulasī leaves ⁶ are mere leaves of a tree; myrobalans ⁷ are mere fruits of trees; Sālagrama ⁸ is a mere stone; images of Devatā are mere pieces of wood, and a Brāhmaṇa is merely an ordinary man; Svayambhu Śiva ⁹ is merely a round stone; conch is merely a kind of shell, and the horn of rhinoceros ¹⁰ is merely flesh in a transformed state. These and such other notions as that Tīrthas ¹¹ are merely water, Gangā is a mere river, and holy places are mere pieces of land, repeatedly appear in the mind of Jīvas as obstacles in the form of scepticism, and obstruct the performance of a religious rite (7-10). It is only when the mind is drawn by the upward attraction of Dharma by virtue of merit,¹² acquired in previous births,

time¹ when everyone seeks a Dharma² suited to his liking. For those who thus seek Dharmas to suit their individual tastes, the Śāstra is an eyesore; for that is called Śāstra by which the wayward faculties of the mind are brought under control, and which is, in fact, the unfailing instrument by which the vast dominion of the Queen of Queens³ of the Universe is ruled. It is no wonder that the Śāstra should be an eyesore to unruly subjects who dishonour the commands of their Sovereign. Subordination to the commands of Śāstra is nowadays considered derogatory to freedom, and consequently extremely distasteful. What, however, such persons really think is that their Dharma should be subordinate to their command, for they consider themselves free men.

Idleness makes people semi-omniscient, for idle people eagerly seek opportunities to avoid work; and it is really this eagerness to avoid labour which lies at the root of their unswerving faith in such Śāstra as seek to establish the superiority of Jñāna-kāṇḍa⁴ of their unique love for the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, Bhagavadgītā, and Upaniṣads, and of their equally unique repugnance for Tantra, Mantra, Yoga, Bhajana and Sādhana Śāstras. Rising before daybreak, bathing early in the morning, performance of the Sandhyā rite,⁵ cleansing temples, collecting Kuśa grass, flowers, Tulsi-leaves, Bael-leaves, and so forth, fetching water from streams,⁶ taking only one meal a day, eating haviṣya food⁷ without flesh, performance of religious rites, Śrāddha⁸ and Tarpaṇa,⁹ observing hospitality and continence,¹⁰ lying on the ground, keeping up at nights, visiting burning-grounds¹¹ and places of pilgrimage,¹² constant expenditure of money on religious works in the names of Devas and Pitris¹³—all these are doubtless troublesome things.

been saying: "The Karmakāṇḍa ¹ is a jar full of poison." The Śiva community also says, through the grace of Śaṅkarācārya: "Sadāśiva am I, and consciousness." ² The Śākta community says: "Bhairava am I; Śiva am I." Those who are initiated and educated in the polemics of knowledge and science of the nineteenth century consider the chief and final decision of all Śāstras to be that there is no connection between Dharmā and Karma; ³ but in the Bhagavadgītā (which is the basis for all the Śāstras on the authority of which these people seek to establish the superiority of their novel, tasteful, and agreeable views) the commands which Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself gave to Arjuna respecting work, when the latter was unable to decide for himself what to do, clearly prove that there is no greater sin for a man who is attached to the world than to give up work. ³ But we need not confine ourselves to ordinary folk attached to the world, for the Bhagavadgītā says that the Yoga of work is the highest duty even of Yogīs who are detached from it. For instance:

"In this world there is a twofold path, as I before said, O sinless one! that of Yoga, by knowledge of the Sāmkhyas; and that of Yoga by action of the Yogīs." ⁴

"Man winneth not freedom from action by abstaining from activity, nor by mere renunciation doth he rise to perfection." ⁵

"Nor can anyone, even for an instant, remain really actionless; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities ⁶ born of nature." ⁷ ⁸

"Who sitteth controlling the organs of action, but dwelling in his mind on the objects of the senses, that bewildered man is called a hypocrite. ⁹ But who, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna! with the organs of action without attachment, performeth Yoga by action, he is worthy." ¹⁰

"There is nothing in the three worlds, O Pārtha! ¹ that should be done by Me, nor anything unattained that might be attained; yet I mingle in action." ²

"Who abides ever in this teaching of Mine, full of faith and free from cavilling, they, too, are released from actions." ³

"Who carp at My teaching, and act not thereon, senseless, deluded in all knowledge, know thou these mindless ones as fated to be destroyed." ⁴

"Even the man of knowledge behaves in conformity with his own nature. Beings follow nature. What shall restraint avail?" ⁵

"Better one's own duty, ⁶ though destitute of merit, than the duty ⁶ of another, well discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty. ⁶ The duty ⁶ of another is full of danger." ⁷

In the fourth chapter it is said:

"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Pārtha!" ⁸

"They who long after success in action on earth, worship the Shining One's, ⁹ for in brief space verily, in this world of men, success is born of action." ¹⁰

"The four castes were emanated by Me by the different distribution of qualities ¹¹ and actions. Know Me to be the author of them, though the actionless and inexhaustible." ¹²

"Nor do actions affect Me, nor is the fruit of action desired by Me. He who thus knoweth Me is not bound by actions." ¹³

"Having thus known, our forefathers, ever seeking liberation, performed action. Therefore do thou also perform action, as did our forefathers in the olden time." ¹⁴

"He who acteth, placing all actions in the Eternal,¹ abandoning attachment, is unaffected by sin as a lotus-leaf by the waters."²

"Yogīs, having abandoned attachment, perform action only by the body, by the mind, by the Reason,³ and even by the senses, for the purification of the self."⁴

"Having known Me, as the Enjoyer of sacrifice and of austerity, the mighty Ruler of all the worlds, and the Lover of all beings, he goeth to peace."⁵

In the sixth chapter it is said:

"He that performeth such action as his duty, independently of the fruit of action, he is an ascetic,⁶ he is a Yogī; not he that is without fire and without rites."⁷

"That which is called renunciation, know thou that as a Yoga, O Pāṇḍava! Nor doth anyone become a Yogī with the formative will⁸ unrenounced."⁹

"For the sage who is seeking Yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage, when he is enthroned in Yoga, serenity is called the means."¹⁰

"The Yogī is greater than the ascetics.¹¹ He is thought to be greater than even the wise.¹² The Yogī is greater than the men of action, therefore become thou a Yogī, O Arjuna!"¹³

"And among all Yogīs, he who, full of faith, with the inner self¹⁴ abiding in Me, adorneth Me, he is considered by Me to be the most completely harmonized."¹⁵

In the eighth chapter it is said:

"He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another

"Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bhārata! By His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace, the everlasting dwelling place." ¹

"Thus hath wisdom, more secret than secrecy itself, been declared unto thee by Me; having reflected on it fully, then act thou as thou listest." ²

"Listen thou again to My supreme word, most secret of all. Beloved art thou of Me and steadfast of heart, therefore will I speak for thy benefit." ³

"Merge thy mind in Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, prostrate thyself before Me, thou shalt come even to Me. I pledge thee My troth; thou art dear to Me." ⁴

"Abandoning all duties, ⁵ come unto Me alone for shelter. Sorrow not; I will liberate thee from all sins." ⁶

Let Sādhakas now see for themselves whether in the Gītā Bhagavān has prescribed abandonment of work ⁷ or performance of it. We are not at all astonished or grieved to see that a study of Bhagavadgītā leads to an abandonment of Karmakāṇḍa ⁸ by sentimental folk who feign devotion and who go emotion-mad at the very mention of Bhagavadgītā, though they have no devotion to Bhagavān Himself. What we are sorry for is, that even such men as worship the speaker of this Gītā as their Iṣṭadevatā and call it Bhagavadgītā, on account of its words having issued from His fair mouth, say that "the Karmakāṇḍa is a jar of poison". Who can penetrate this mystery? When the fruit appears the flower dries up of itself and falls.

But how wonderful must be the intensity of the greed and the

Vaidyanātha,¹ the destroyer of Tripurā, will deliver society from the pains of this disease.

Had the examination for the degree sought for been held at any seat of learning other than that of Sādhana of Mahāvidyā, the number of learned degree-holders would have been so large that it is doubtful whether place could have been found for them all in Brahmāloka, Vaikuṇṭha, and Kailāsa. But we are secure from this danger in that Bhagavān Himself, the dweller in all hearts and Creator of all things, is the Examiner. Unless He gives the degree of service to himself, who is there who can free himself of servitude to the Upādhis? ² It is the presence of these latter pestilential Upādhis which prevents the acquisition of the former. These latter Upādhis must be shaken off before we can obtain the former Upādhi, or this Upādhi must be obtained before the others can be got rid of. There might have been a chance of bogus Upādhis (degrees) being considered genuine, were it possible to go elsewhere after having received them from Bhagavān. But, O pretender to devotion, who art so fond of the Upādhi (title) of devotee! all this Universe is the field of work of that Rājarājeśvarī alone, who is the sole Mistress of this infinite creation of things moving and unmoving. Where in this Universe can you go so that you may escape the all-penetrating look of Her whose eyes are infinite? Who has told you that your bogus ³ Upādhi will not be caught in the net ⁴ of Her Māyā, in which everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is eternally held? Why, then, further trouble to create a counterfeit ⁵ in the midst of this net? He who tries to snap the Karma-threads of this net by his own strength knows not that its meshes are there only to take him out of the

and so forth, no matter whether they renounce anything else or not. Why, brethren, is your love for God so much greater than your love for your wives, children, and relations, that when liberation, which loosens all bonds, is so near at hand, the bond of prayer will alone frustrate it? ¹ How imprudent is the scepticism of those who, blinded by the vanity of their knowledge, are keen for every worldly pursuit, and yet would renounce Sandhyā prayers, worship, and so forth, on the ground of their being Karma? In short, it is no easy matter to throw dust in the eye of Dharma.²

Bhagavān, who sees all things, has said: "Even against your will you will be obliged to do Karma." Under the severe pressure of the unrelenting law of nature I am bound to serve Karma as a slave, for there is no means of escape from its close grasp. Why, when accepting this slavish service of Karma, should I be deprived of the benefit of its fear-dispelling hand? I would have, with all submissiveness, renounced Karma, had Karma renounced me. Since I have been born in the land of Karma, in order to perform it, I will not renounce Karma so long as life lasts; but if, on the other hand, Karma renounces me, I will not be sorry therefore. I am very much afraid of doing my own Karma, but why should I be afraid of doing the Karma of my Mother, seeing that She is the Dispeller of fear? I do not any longer belong to myself, so that, O brother! what Karma can there be which I can call my own? Karma is Hers, whose I am. I am the Mother and the Mother is mine. The glory of Karma with me lies no longer in its being Karma, but in the fact of its being the Mother's Karma. So long as the relation of Mother and son will not end for me, this joy of Karma also will not so end. Blessed are my birth and life in that, by being

See that I, who have been initiated in the great Mantra, the gem of spiritual consciousness ¹ (which is of rarity to even Brahmā and other Devas), and who have been upbrought in the Sādhana of the great Yantra, ² which is the source of the creation, preservation, and destruction of the three worlds, may not become Motherless when Thou art the Mother! For what have I come here, if it be not to do the Mother's work? Bless me, O Mother! by answering this, my question to Thyself! O Mother! the earth is too small to hold the bliss which I feel to-day when I remember that, being a Jīva, I have been initiated in Thy Mantra as uttered by Śīva Himself, O Daughter of the Mountain! Thou art bliss itself. Thyself keep to-day Thy own bliss, and at the same time take this joyless son of Thine up into Thy blissful arms in order to make the words of Sadānanda ³ true. I have been initiated. Now, tell me how I am to be educated? Thou hast Thyself promulgated Thy commands in the form of Śāstra. Do Thou now Thyself explain the truth concerning Thee ⁴ by opening in the form of Sādhana the door of that Śāstra. Tell me, O Mother! what have you said in the Śāstra?

In the Tantra Samhitā it is said: "For him who has received Mantra—that is, initiation—worship is of two kinds, according as it is outer and inner. Inner worship, to the exclusion of outer worship, is prescribed for Sannyāsis, whilst both inner and outer worship are prescribed for all others."

In the Gautamiya Tantra it is said: "This inner worship grants liberation to Sādhakas even during their life-time, but Munis alone who are desirous of liberation ⁵ have the competence to perform it. Hence,

that mind, such an effort will prove as futile both here and hereafter, as if we sought to drink milk where there is only whey. Hence, so long as I am unable to bind at the door of the temple of my heart the All-good Suravi¹ from whom are drawn, and who fulfils, all desires, the only way in which I can preserve my life is not to make myself dependent solely on milk, but to use milk, molasses, sweetmeats, or any other thing which I can procure at all times without difficulty. However sour be the mango or amḍa² you may give me, I shall mix with it the molasses of lesser devotion,³ and prepare such a sour curry as will make the mouths of even Sannyāsis and Sādhus water, and will bring back a liking for food even to a sick man, to whom it is repugnant, so as to render him again capable of eating even sweetmeats and sweet pudding. Of what use is it to tempt me with milk, pudding, and sweetmeats if I have a dislike for every kind of food? If my mind is not calm, of what use is it to give me, who suffer from the disease of Samsāra, instructions in mental worship, which is the food for Yogīs? So long as I have a dislike for food, I am not only unable to eat the food you offer, but am likely to suffer an untimely death by starvation. Hence, in the dispensary of Vaidyanātha,⁴ and according to the Tāntrik cult, food for sickness is not the same as food for Yogīs. Sannyāsis have the privilege of performing mental worship only, but as a man of the Samsāra, I may always perform both mental and outer worship. First of all, that is the most delicious thing for me which will cure my dislike for food. If you want to give me milk, give it; but so long as my dislike for food remains, pray do not depend on milk alone. For the moment, milk will not give as much gratification as sour things will do. To-day I shall feel

competence, therefore I shall, owing to the absence of Tārā from the heart, despite the power of sight,¹ see darkness only in the three worlds as I sit in this temple, illumined with hundreds of lamps. Can the simultaneous appearance of even hundreds of millions of suns and moons illumine the place where the Brahmayī is wanting? In the infinite firmament of my heart infinite numbers of planets, stars, suns, and moons shine less than glow-worms if the light of Brahmayī is there. If it is not there, hundreds of thousands of each of such lights cannot make up for even a hundredth part of Her brilliance. So long as the brilliance of the full moon does not permanently exist in my firmament; so long as my Mother dwelling in the orb of Mantra, full of pure nectar, does not spread the lustre of Her eternally beaming smile on the hill of dawn of my heart,² so long as the bright and the dark fortnights³ exist for me; so long as there are for me the double path of desire⁴ and cessation of desire,⁵ Samsāra and Sādhana, adherence to home⁶ without and homeless asceticism⁷ within; so long I must (if I would see the moonbeams which charm the mind of the Moon-crested Deva) make the moon rise without, destroying the darkness within with the light of this moon, and with the help of that reflected light discover the centre of its emanation. It is almost impossible to gaze directly at the sun, yet one may easily and minutely examine the solar disc in its reflection in the water of some stone or other vessel. In the same way subtle manifestations⁸ of Her real self become truly visible without in Yantras,⁹ Mantras, images, and so forth. Pure mental worship has been prohibited for householders, because they cannot achieve it without outer worship. Samsāra Dharma¹⁰ is the consecrated shrine of human worship.¹¹

At a particular time during the first stage of Sādhana, after initiation, when the Mahārājā, in disregard of his public duties, and with prohibition of public access, used to remain constantly immersed in Pūjā, Dhyāna, and so forth, a pair of gold bracelets were ordered for his wife, Rāṇī Kātyāyanī. A few days after the order had been given the Rājā, seeing the wrists of the Rāṇī unadorned, asked her the reason for it, and was told in reply that the bracelets had not yet been prepared. Next day, when he was engaged in Pūjā, a Sannyāsī with matted hair appeared at the gate of his palace, and asked the gatekeeper: "Where is your Mahārājā? Tell him that a Sannyāsī¹ has come to see him." They replied with great humility: "Lord! the Mahārājā is now in the house of worship. No one may go there; and even if we speak to him now, there is no chance of getting a reply." The Sannyāsī laughed and said: "I tell you, go". The gatekeepers were afraid of disobeying him, and did as they were told to do, but to no effect. Rājā Rāma Kṛṣṇa was at that time immersed in mental worship of his Iṣṭadevatā, and so made no reply, notwithstanding the arrival of the Sannyāsī. The gate-keepers came back and told the Sannyāsī what had happened. The Sannyāsī raised his eyes a little, smiled, and said in a deep voice: "When the Mahārājā comes out after finishing his worship, tell him that to think of the Rāṇī's bracelets is not to perform mental worship of Iṣṭadevatā." Saying this, the Sannyāsī went away hurriedly. The gate-keepers did not understand the meaning of his words, and did not dare oppose the Sannyāsī from going away, for as an ascetic he was free to come and go. Afterwards, on coming out of the house of worship, Rājā Rāma Kṛṣṇa asked the gate-keepers: "Where is

door of the Rājā's house of worship. On that day also the Rājā was busy performing mental worship, but he found himself in a great difficulty. In order to worship the Devī who is mind itself¹ with mental articles of worship, the Rājā had that day adorned the brow of the Devī with dishevelled hair with a high-crested mental jewelled crown. He then proceeded to adorn the shell-shaped neck² of the Devī who bears great love for Her devotees with a mental garland of crimson Jabā³ flowers. But as often as he raised his hands to put the garland on the Mother's neck, so often his effort was baffled by the high crest of the crown. Having repeatedly failed, he became sorrowful and anxious, and thought to himself. "Perhaps to-day I shall not be able to put a garland on the Mother's neck." In unbounded sorrow his large eyes filled with tears, and weeping he cried: "O Mother! what shall I do?" A voice from outside replied: "Rāma Kṛṣṇa! why do you weep? It is by putting a crown on the Mother's head that you have to-day brought about all this trouble.⁴ Take it off, and then Garland Her." Rāma Kṛṣṇa started, left the Mother and Her worship, and opened both the outer and inner doors of the house of worship. He then saw before him a Mahāpuruṣa,⁵ a Sannyāsī smeared with ashes and full of Tejas.⁶ He recognized him as Pūrṇānanda Giri the perfect Sādhaka, who had been his companion in Sādhana done by them in cremation-grounds⁷ in the previous birth. He bowed at his feet, and said "Brother! this is my condition to-day! The Mother and you know how I have passed these three years since you went away, after having done me the favour of putting me to shame." Pūrṇānanda laughed, and said: "Have no fear, brother. It is because I then left that I am able to

Now, Sādhakas consider how few fortunate perfect Sādhaka Mahā-puruṣas like Mahārāja Rāma Kṛṣṇa are born in this Samsāra. How many in this world are blessed with friends of previous birth, such as Pūrṇānanda Giri, to answer their questions? How many religious heroes are there who, being Princes themselves, have yet the strength to turn from royal opulence, splendours, and enjoyments, and become Śmaśāna-sannyāsīs? ¹ To how many Sādhakas does the Mother of the world show Herself in the form of Guru at the time of their death? Even such a man as Rāma Kṛṣṇa, who had already greatly practised Sādhana in previous births, in the first stage of his present Sādhana forgot the Mother during mental worship, and thought of the bracelets of his wife. Mental worship being so difficult, does it not make one ashamed even to think that you and I, steeped in worldliness as we are, have perfect competence to perform it? Pūrṇānanda Giri came to remind Rāma Kṛṣṇa of this. But for you and I it is not necessary that a Pūrṇānanda Giri should so come, for does not the burden of this joyless mountain ² of Samsāra remind us of it? Rāma Kṛṣṇa's connection with the Samsāra lasted only so long as he did not acquire full competence for mental worship, but when, by the grace of the Devī who is perfect Bliss, he met Pūrṇānanda, and acquired such competence, from that time his connection with the Samsāra ceased. Then was the day on which his mind became self-controlled, leaving all thought of the Rāṇī and her bracelets. From that day began the dance of the waves of joy of the Devī, who is mind itself. She revelled in battle, in the broad field of his mind, and as a result the mental garland of Jabā flowers struck Her crown and was thrown back. ³

ornaments. It was at this time of adornment that this trouble about Her crown and garland happened to Rāma Kṛṣṇa. Can the mind of a Jīva, attached to worldly things, remain undistracted during the time which is required to do all this? Not to speak of undistractedness for the whole of this period, is it even steady for the length of time which it takes us to say these few words? Hari, Hari! you and I start on journeys to Vaikuṇṭha, Kailāsa, and Bṛndāvana ¹ under the guidance of minds which travel to the South Pole from the North Pole at every twinkling of the eye ten times every half an hour! You and I will be left on the path, and the mind will go to its own place.² Thus, neither home-life nor homeless asceticism,³ nor Vaikuṇṭha, nor Kailāsa will be for me. To live at home after that, with life only, but without the mind, is to lose all. The learned of ancient times have therefore said, "where there is a chance of losing all, a wise man gives up half," in order that he may save the other half. The Śāstra, also observing our danger of losing all, has counselled the performance of both inner and outer sacrifice,⁴ and of both mental and outer worship. He who proceeds to perform exclusively mental worship in dependence on a mind untrained and unpurified runs every chance of losing all. At such a time I shall deem it a great gain if, by abandoning half of mind,⁵ I can save the half of outer worship. Hence, until non-dualistic Samādhi ⁶ is attained, both Sannyāsīs and householders must perform both inner and outer Sacrifice. A householder in particular will be wholly ruined unless he does so. A Sannyāsī's mind may, by dint of his cultivation of discernment ⁷ and dispassion, become someday free from the bond of attachment to worldly things, and thus transparent and fair and pure; but for a house-

by performing inner sacrifice in this manner Sādhakas become Brahman Itself, and it is in this way that I worship Īśvarī. And Yogīs and Munis also constantly perform worship in this way. But a householder can never attain Siddhi by means of this inner sacrifice¹ alone. He can attain Siddhi only if he performs both outer and inner sacrifice.”¹

Here Sādhakas should note that Maheśvara Himself says: “It is in this manner that I worship Īśvarī! And Yogīs and Munis also perform worship in this way.” As to His worshipping Himself whether as Śiva or as Śakti, we have nothing to say. But speaking of Yogīs and Munis He says that they worship “constantly,” meaning thereby that they, too, are afraid of falling from their station² unless they keep up a practice of constant worship. Now say, O mental worship! is it not a sign of impending lunacy to think that to-day you and I, whose efforts at worship are few and far between, are not competent to accomplish the form of worship in which Maheśvara alone worships Himself with full competence, and in which the competence of Yogīs and Munis is made to depend upon the constant practice of inner worship? Had householders been altogether free of outer affairs the Śāstra would never have bound them to outer practice, nor should we have had to enter into this close and sifting inquiry on the subject for their sake. You, O householder! may easily consider yourself free of all outer activities, but so long as you bear the title “householder” how can I believe it? The Samsāra consists of outer activities, and household Dharma is the Dharma by which the continuance of this Samsāra is maintained. Who will then believe that a person whose title of “household” is based on his connection with this household

mental worship. A single day's abstention from outer bathing makes my body restless with the burning of summer heat; a single day's fasting weakens my physical body; a single night's waking robs me of the power of rising the next day. These causes not only make the body unfit, but also exhaust, disturb, and overpower its mental faculties. When thus my mind cannot have peace and comfort for a single moment in the absence of outer objects, it is obvious that it cannot rest satisfied with the performance of exclusively mental worship. If, however, through continuous practice of inner worship along with outer worship I ever sink in the sea of Her manifestations¹—Her form, qualities, name, and love—and am overwhelmed by them; if, like a deeply intoxicated man, who, though he rightly and with safety does all acts which are matters of daily habit, yet does not perceive that it is he himself who does them, I can become intoxicated with the drink of the nectar of love and devotion to Her; and though performing the works of Samsāra based on habit, yet do not perceive my own agency in such performance; and if I thus mingle my individual existence with Her existence, it is then that I shall be competent to give up outer and to perform exclusively mental worship. And on that day I shall not only give up outer worship, but all outer objects will of themselves be separated from me. So long as this does not happen, it must be deemed a great sin even to desire to give up outer worship by merely personal effort.² If we suppose that we can constantly and carefully perform all outer works concerning the body, the Samsāra and worldly things, and yet at the time of Her worship we can worship purely mentally, and then after such worship resume attention to our food and other physical desires and

Mahāmāyā, who is eternal and true, He should ever sing hymns in Her praise, and worship Her, and ever hear and talk of Her name, Her qualities, form, and greatness, and so forth (2). A man of sense should, instead of wasting time in gambling, and the like useless pursuits, spend his life in worship, Japa, Yajña, Stava,¹ and so forth, of the Devatā (3). What is achieved by talk of other matters but a useless waste of life? Hence, O Devī! a Sādhaka will, on receiving knowledge of Mantra, Yantra, and so forth, from the mouth of the Guru, happily attain liberation from the terrible bonds of Samsāra (4).”

The following are Śiva's words in the Kulārṇava ² Tantra: “O Devī, I shall tell thee what Thou hast asked me. Listen. O Śiva-Śāsanā,³ a Jīva cannot attain liberation except through initiation (in the Tāntrik cult) ⁴ (1). Attainment of Siddhi in Mantra is impossible without Yoga, and attainment of Siddhi in Yoga is impossible without Mantra. Hence, only the form of Yoga, in which both are practised, leads to attainment of Brahman (2). Just as in a dark room one can see everything with the help of a light, so a Jīva enshrouded in Māyā sees the true aspect of Paramātmā with the help of Mantra (3). Hence, one should earnestly receive initiation immediately on the attainment of his sixteenth year. Just as a piece of iron when treated with juices of herbs and Mantras turns into gold, so on being bathed in the milk of Guru's mercy and initiated in the great Mantra a Jīva forsakes Jīvahood and undoubtedly attains Śivahood (4).”

In the Gandharva Tantra it is said: ⁵ “Ātmā is Tripureśvarī ⁶ Herself, and is unattached, attributeless, and pure. A Sādhaka will in this way

none (4). Although possessing a human body, this wise man who is proficient in, and whose Ātmā is in, Yoga is in reality not a man, but a Devatā. Such a man alone is a Sannyāsī (one who has forsaken Karma).¹ Such a man alone widens the path of Karma.² The Ātmā of such a man alone is united with the Deity; and such a man alone is called a Muni by all Śāstras. There is nothing in this world which he cannot do, and he alone is an accomplished great Yogī (5). He whose Ātmā is always united with Devatā, gratifying and adorning his Ātmā with all pleasing objects of sensuous perception, and worshipping the Devatā with a sense of Her inseparateness from his Ātmā, and whose Ātmā is ever united with Devatā, is himself a Devatā (6). A Sādhaka certainly will perceive the presence of his Devatā in the work, the doer, and the work done; in whatever things—such as dance, music, and the like—he sees or hears; in whatever dresses and ornaments he wears; in whatever animals and things, be it elephants, horses, carriage, bedstead, and so forth, on which he goes and rests; in whatever he eats, and, in short, in whatever else he does (7). When in possession of those objects of desire which a worldly man enjoys for his own self-gratification, a Sādhaka will perceive the Divinity within them, and enjoy them for the gratification of the Devatā dwelling in his heart (8). Everything that a Sādhaka does, from his awaking in early morning to the time of deep sleep in the depth of the night, will be done with the sense of the presence of Devatā therein. The habit of so doing will arouse a divine disposition³ in the Sādhaka by means of which he will attain Siddhi (9). Only he who has such disposition becomes Siddha⁴ and none else (that is to say, another person may have some other form

it is impossible to receive worship anywhere unless one worships his *Iṣṭadevatā*."

In the *Muṇḍamālā Tantra* it is said: ¹ "O *Caṇḍī*! he who worships *Kālikā* with devotion and according to the rites attains to the state of *Śiva*, even though he be a *Jīva*. This is true, true, undoubtedly true. A *Sādhaka* should always perform the rites.² It is by the performance of rites that a great *Sādhaka* attains the highest *Siddhi*. Hence, one should never renounce rites."

In the *Yāmala* we read: "Meditation.³ is of two kinds, according as it is gross or subtle. Subtle meditation is the meditation on the *Devatā*'s body, consisting of *Mantra*, and gross meditation is meditation upon Her body, with hands, feet, and so forth. The subtle form of Supreme *Prakṛti* is made of pure knowledge. It is not possible for a *Jīva* to meditate on this subtle form. By meditating on the gross form does a *Jīva* attain liberation."

"O *Devī*! unless worshipped, the *Devatā* never grants any fruit. It is only when the *Sādhaka*, with or without knowledge, meditates on, remembers, worships, praises in hymns, and pays obeisance to, the *Dev* that She grants liberation to Her worshippers."

In the *Gandharva Tantra* *Īśvara* said: "He who devotedly performs daily worship in this manner becomes like *Kandarpa*⁴ to women, and powerful like *Śiva* in the world of men (1). He is truly fortunate, and an ornament of his race. Blessed indeed are his father and his mother (2). The *Devī* appears in him,⁵ and, like myself, that person, possessor of great knowledge, undoubtedly becomes master of the eight-fold *Siddhi* of *Aṇimā*⁶

in fiery energy ¹ he is like the Sun; in strength he is like the God of wind, Pavana; in liberality he is like Indra; ² in singing he is, as it were, Tumburu ³ himself. Such is the man who daily worships the All-good Devī, who grants all desires (6). O Mistress of Devas! if the worship of Mahātripurasundarī ⁴ is omitted for one day, the Sādhaka should expiate the sin resulting therefrom. He should fast on the day on which there is thus no worship, and perform preliminary rites for the next day's worship. On the day following let him worship first the Guru according to the injunctions, and then after he has finished the worship of Iṣṭadevatā, let him feed virgins and Brāhmaṇas (7-8). Such is the expiation for omission of worship for one day. If it is omitted for more than one day, the defaulter should be re-initiated and perform Japa of his Iṣṭamantra ⁵ a hundred thousand times (9). Whoever omits to perform worship for two or three days in the Sādhana of Mahātripurasundarī and Yoginīs (of any Śakti Devatā), ⁶ loses all his Siddhi, and is cursed by the Yoginīs (10). Life, learning, fame, and strength leave him, and the Yoginīs destroy his flesh, semen, vital fluid, ⁷ and blood, and frustrate all his desires (11). Bitter quarrels arise with friends, and especially with wives. His sin ruins the crops, and he himself falls into dangers at every step (12). Truly, truly he is attacked with diseases, and being impoverished, he suffers even in this world the three forms of terrible sufferings (ādhyātmik, ādhibhautik, and ādhidaivik, and of body, speech, and mind) ⁸ (13). (Sādhakas know that these things constantly happen where the path of Sādhana is obstructed). ⁶ Though a Sādhaka cannot, owing to his neglect to act according to the Śāstra, obtain liberation, yet by virtue of his initiation in

the worship to the care of his Guru, who is visible Brahman. This has been clearly explained in the discourse on Guru-tattva.¹ Now, what we have yet to understand is how the fruit of worship is increased a million-fold by reason of the worship being performed by the Guru himself, and how the benefit of such worship is communicated to the person of the Śiṣya. The fruits of the sacrifice,² worship, and so forth, which a Purohita is empowered by Śāstra to perform in cases where the Yajamāna³ is unable to do so himself, are enjoyable in this world and hereafter. And it is undoubted that, whatever is enjoyable, either in this world or in heaven,⁴ is a subject of sensuous perception; for all objects of enjoyment are apprehended by the senses. From this it conclusively follows that the work of a Purohita is fruitful only as regards the body, senses, mind, and life of the Yajamāna,³ whether in this world or hereafter, but has no greater effect. But what a Guru does, reaches even the Ātmā of the Śiṣya. By virtue of the beneficial work performed by a Purohita, the Yajamāna's Ātmā may be carried to heaven⁴ and other regions of the next world; but its utmost effect is upon the causal body,⁵ and the Ātmā itself is not directly reached. But the fruit of what a Guru does goes beyond the next world, and is the cause of the illumination of the superworldly supreme truth⁶ in the Śiṣya's Ātmā. These supersensuous truths are the subject of constant realization, and superworldly wonders constantly happen in the Śiṣya's Ātmā. At the movement, in every Cakra, of Kuṇḍalinī, the Mistress of Cakras who plays in the heart of the lotus in the Kula-cave,⁷ and moves along the stem of the Mūlādhāra lotus, the Sādhaka's Ātmā rises and sinks in the sea of the Brahma-bliss of Brahmayāyī with the playful

It is only the Śakti by which at the time of initiation the Tejas¹ of the Guru is communicated to the Śiṣya; the Śakti which, like the burning and revealing light, is passed from the lamp of the Guru to the wick of the Śiṣya's body, moist with the oil of the Guru's love; the Śakti which on issuing from the Guru and entering the Śiṣya brings the two bodies into closer union when worship is done; it is that Śakti which alone is able to communicate, directly and at once, to the Śiṣya's body the fruits of the worship and other acts performed by the Guru. For it is only the Mantra-śakti of the particular Devatā which passes from the body of a particular Guru to that of a particular Śiṣya which is capable of entering from that Guru's body into the body of that Śiṣya. To no other Śakti is the path of communication open.²

Just as no one who is not intimately related to us is allowed entry into the inner apartments of our house, so the outer fruits of rites performed by another for the accomplishment of a Sādhaka's happiness enjoyable by his external senses cannot enter into the inner recesses of his heart. They are acquainted with the outside only, and outside they remain. For this reason, the effect which is achieved by worship and so forth performed by Guru, who is visible Brahman,³ or by the Guru's wife or their son, cannot be accomplished if even ten million Purohitas together perform them in concert. Nay, even if, as a representative of the Yajamāna,⁴ the Purohita performs the worship of the same Devatā with the same Mantra (as is the practice in Bengal in Śyāmā Pūjā, Jagaddhātrī Pūjā, and similar other Pūjās),⁵ his worship is powerless to touch the Ātmā of the Sādhaka. For, unlike the Guru, the Purohita's Ātmaśakti or Mantraśakti has never

laugh? Glory to Thee, O Merciful Mother! Glory, glory to Thy anger! Glory to Thy mercy! Glory to the anger by which mercy is conquered!

This wrath of the Mother of the Universe, rare in the three worlds, does not easily fall to the lot of even Śiva, not to speak of Jīvas.

Her anger and satisfaction, of which mention is made in the Śāstra, is not really anger and satisfaction, but a mere show of them for the good of the Sādhaka. Secondly, such satisfaction and anger have reference to the ordinances and prohibitions of the Śāstra. Hence we are afraid lest we should, by failing to rouse that anger in Her which is really satisfaction, call upon ourselves the terrible curse of Her pretended anger, and thus bring about our ruin. The Śāstra, therefore, ordains that we should never entrust Her worship to another. Entrusting, however, the worship to the lotus-feet of Gurudeva is not the same as entrusting it to another, for the relation between a Gurudeva and his Śiṣya is similar to that between the sea and the river. Although they take their rise from different sources, such as mountains, springs, and so forth, yet rivers in the end mingle with the sea and become one with it. So the Ātmās of Śiṣyas, although appearing in different bodies, families and races, mingle with the Guru's Ātmā and become one with it. Just as the sea passes by the force of the tide into the rivers, so, on the rising tide of the bliss of Sādhana in the Ātmā of the Gurudeva, its nature passes from him to the Śiṣya's body by the force of his own Śakti. The water of the sea does not really increase in volume, but merely heaves forward under the influence of the full moon. No such heaving is, however, possible in the waters of rivers. Similarly, no increase or decrease of bliss is possible in the Guru who is full of perfect bliss; but

worship by another, notwithstanding that it is from the ordinary standpoint performed by a person other than the Śiṣya; for in such case the presence of the Guru is the presence of the Śiṣya for the purpose of that worship. If worship of the Sādhaka's Iṣṭadevatā is done by a person who, though not his Guru, is a Tāntrik teacher, then also such worship will be productive of bad fruits; for notwithstanding that such a teacher is a Tāntrik, he is in this matter in the same position as a Purohita, since in neither case is there the relation of Guru and Śiṣya between the party officiating and him for whom the worship is done. The Śāstra has, therefore, said: "O Maheśvarī! if one causes worship and the like to be performed not by these persons, but by a Tāntrik preceptor, then the fruits of such worship will fall into the grasp of Yakṣas and Rākṣasas."¹

All the points of difference which have so far been shown to exist between the effects flowing from the appointment of a Guru and a Purohita become operative only if worship performed by him is Siddha.² But where for want of Śāstrik jurisdiction worship performed by a Purohita is beyond his competency, it cannot be Siddha.² No Tāntrik rite, and not merely the worship of Iṣṭadevatā, will be Siddha if performed by a Purohita. "The provision in the Śāstra for the appointment of various persons as representatives, such a Rtvik's son and others, have force only in regard to religious rites prescribed in the Smṛti Śāstra. Worship prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra should never be performed by means of such representatives."³ Worship other than that of the Iṣṭadevatā will be Siddha if performed by means of any Tāntrik teacher; but in the absence of Guru, Guru's wife, or Guru's son, a Sādhaka must himself perform the worship.

is perfect in all His limbs, He grants Siddhi to the Sādhaka in everything. It is by His union with the supreme Śakti which arises out of the effort to accomplish all those limbs that the Yajñapuruṣa produces Siddhi ¹ (7). The omission of limbs is not so reprehensible in other worship as it is in that of the perfect Yajña-body of Tripurasundarī (any Śakti image) ² (8). For the attainment of Siddhi and Vibhūti ³ a Sādhaka should perform worship according to his means. If this rule is transgressed, not only will the worship be defective, but he will incur the great sin of murder of Brahman; since in that case the body of Yajña, which is the body of Brahman itself, is severed and thus made limbless. The limbs of the Yajña-body should be accomplished as directed in the Śāstra, and neither more nor less; for both possession of greater or of a less number of limbs by the Yajña produces sin in the Sādhaka (9). A great Pūjā, ⁴ with abundance of materials therefore, should be performed on a fourteenth lunar day, or an eighth lunar day, or a full moon day, or between two months (the day between two months or the last day of a month), ⁵ or on a Mahābhūta ⁶ day (10). If the fourteenth day of a dark fortnight be a Tuesday, that day is called a Mahābhūta day. Any special performance on this day causes Bhūtas (beings and things) to come within the control ⁶ of the Sādhaka. Again if there is a conjunction of the Puṣyā Nakṣatra ⁷ on that day, performance on that day is productive of countless fruits (11)."

CHAPTER XIX

CEREMONIAL WORSHIP ¹

IN the Gandharva Tantra it is said: "A man should worship a Devatā by becoming a Devatā himself.² One should not worship a Devatā without himself becoming a Devatā. If a person worship a Devatā without himself becoming a Devatā, he will not reap the fruits of that worship."

The Vaśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa says: "If a man worships Viṣṇu without himself becoming Viṣṇu, he will not reap the fruits of that worship. If he worships Viṣṇu by himself becoming Viṣṇu, a Sādhaka will become Mahāviṣṇu."

The Bhārata says: "Man should not take the name of Viṣṇu without himself becoming Viṣṇu, nor worship Viṣṇu without becoming Viṣṇu, nor remember Viṣṇu without becoming Viṣṇu. One cannot attain Viṣṇu without becoming Viṣṇu."

The Bhaviṣya says³: "A man should not remember Rudra without himself becoming Rudra, nor worship Rudra without becoming Rudra,

in the Tantra Śāstra (4). It is this Ātmā whose substance is Bhāva which must be heard in the word of Śruti; it is this Bhāva which must be the subject of thought.¹ It is this Ātmā whose substance is Bhāva which must be meditated on according to the instructions of the Guru (5). When in this way hearing,² thinking,¹ meditation,³ Sādhana, and so forth, have been performed, then that Ātmā which is Bhāva, and which is detached from all things, is surely realized. When adorned by the multitude of Bhāvas, Bhagavān Parameśvara begins to manifest the power of His own play in that body of the Sādhaka matured by Sādhana, then all the Bhāvas of the Sādhaka disappear in the body of Bhagavān leaving merely a feeling of the presence of Bhagavān, whose substance is one undivided Bhāva and of massive consciousness and bliss (6).

“A cow eats various kinds of grass, but extracts from them only one essential thing,⁴ which assumes various forms by connection⁵ with the Upādhis⁶ of milk and so forth. In the same way, in whatever of its constituents⁷ Bhāva may be cultivated, in the end all Bhāvas are converted into a single great Bhāva in the form of the Supreme Devatā, whose substance is massive consciousness and bliss (7). It is the essence⁵ which is produced in the body of a cow from grass which ultimately appears as the chief essence,⁸ milk, and from that milk is evolved that which is but a changed form of it, the essence⁴ of curd; from curd comes ghee, and even from ghee some other essence⁴ unnamed. But however numerous the varieties may be, such as milk, curd, ghee, and so forth, due to difference of conditions under which they are formed, the substance of them all is ultimately the essence⁴ derived originally from grass; all which subse-

sometimes liberated, sometimes happy, sometimes male, sometimes female, sometimes neuter, and sometimes beyond the Upādhis of sex and bodiles s. though present in an infinite number of bodies (11). In this way the eternal Paramātmā, who is the essence ¹ and the great Bhāva, ² plays the play of His own diversity in the meditations, consisting of different Bhāvas of Sādhakas, despite that He is Himself one and without a second. In reality the play also of Her who is full of play is the Śakti, which is Herself, and diversity in that play does not affect Her inherent unity (12). The Sādhaka in whom appears the Divyabhāva or Virabhāva sees the supreme Tattva or Brahmayī in a single life ³ (13). He who, liberated whilst yet living, ⁴ has become Ātmā in its true form, moves on the earth merely to work out the remaining portion of his Karma, which has begun to bear fruits ⁵ in his body. It is such a Mahātmā, son of the Devī, who is called a Bhairava. Of the three Bhāvas spoken of above, two, the Virabhāva and the Divyabhāva, are good ⁶ Bhāvas, and are the essence of Kulatattva; and are superior on account of their connection with Kula, and are direct paths to liberation. For this reason the nature of ⁷ these two paths should not be told to all classes of Sādhakas (15). The Sādhaka who does not perform Sādhana in the Bhāva prescribed for him in the Śāstra ⁸ for ten days continuously, and whose worship of Iṣṭadevatā becomes in consequence thereof defective, is fallen in the domain of Sādhana (16). To such a fallen man the Guru should not give instructions in any Bhāva or worship. Such a fallen Sādhaka will only become pure in Bhāva if he receives initiation again from a Kaula Guru. For this reason a right-minded Sādhaka should perform the worship of his Iṣṭadevatā and such other acts with

Kaulika Devatā worshipped in Kulācāra by previous successive generations, he will surely attain Siddhi without having recourse to Paśubhāva by travelling along the path of Kulācāra only (5). But if a Sādhaka of the Paśubhāva, can fortunately gain the favour (consciousness)¹ of Vidyā (Mantraśakti),¹ then only will he become competent for the Vīrabhāva. Subsequently, by the grace of the Vīrabhāva, he will attain Divyabhāva (6). The best of men who take refuge in the Divyabhāva, and the Vīrabhāva become undoubtedly masters of desire-gratifying trees and creepers (7). Sādhaka should live in some great Pīṭha² as an Āśramī (adhering to any of the four Āśramas—namely, Brahmacharya, and so forth),¹ devoted to meditation, well-versed in Mantras and Tantras, and possessed of self-control. Such a Sādhaka will command the world of Jīvas by virtue of his own power (8). If, fortunately, a Sādhaka succeeds in attaining Bhāva, Mahābhāva, and so forth, it is not necessary for him to acquire any other fruits; for the moment a man attains to Bhāva he knows My Tattva³ (9). He who has attained Siddhi in Bhāva very soon attains Siddhi in speech. Sarasvatī constantly dwells within him, and Lakṣmī lives constantly in his house as his Mother, forsaking even Nārāyaṇa⁴ in Vaikuṇṭha.⁴ My perfect grace undoubtedly falls upon him, and then the Sādhaka surely attains great Siddhi. O Sadāśiva! true, true is this, and indeed true (11).”

In our worldly experience we constantly see that the more a man becomes full of Bhāva for wife and children, the more he loses himself and becomes full of them. The Śakti of love of the loved one, in respect of whom such depth of Bhāva exists, is communicated in an equal measure to the body, senses, and mind of the lover. When a lover becomes restless

connection with the objects of our love; otherwise, why is it that parents keep with great care things belonging to their children who live far away from them? Such articles are materials for the perfection ¹ of Bhāva in the domain of love. The sight of even a piece of cloth worn by a deceased son fills his parents with intense grief. The sight of a pair of shoes worn by her deceased husband moves a woman to tears. All these are but different forms of perfection ² of Bhāva. Now, let Sādhakas consider what sort of a consummation ³ of Bhāva there is if this love be centred not in wife and children, who are but, as it were, persons seen in a dream in this transient Samsāra, but in the beauteous feet of the Mother of the world, who is the centre of all love in the Brahmāṇḍa, full of love, full of Brahman, and full of bliss? How intense will be the climax of the consummation ³ of Bhāva of him who has offered at the feet of the Mother all devotion, all love, and all affection for parents, wife, and children! Worldly Jīva! if the sight of a toy which belonged to a son or a daughter of yours can overpower you with Bhāva and make you sometimes laugh and sometimes weep, just think what is it that a Sādhaka cannot do in the intoxication of Bhāva whose son's or daughter's ⁴ plaything is this entire Universe? In the sphere of his Bhāva there is no such thing as Abhāva (want of Bhāva).⁵ The sight of everything in this world moves him to overflowing Bhāva. In whatever direction he turns his eyes, on water, land, or space, he sees the robes (Ambara) of Her who is robed with space (Digambarī). In play the Mad Girl ⁶ has gone away, no one knows where, leaving Her garments behind. This is the reason why to-day the sky is full of the Mother's robes and the Universe is full of the Mother's

exists as Tejas¹ in vehicles, stones, and minerals. O Mistress of Devās! after this what need be said about Her presence in living beings? Nothing exists where Mahāmāyā does not exist." Then only does the wave of Śiva's song, "Thou Kālī art alone the Dispenser of good Spouse of Girīśa,² and art all things," penetrate with its flow through the innermost recesses of his heart. Worship of the Devī's playful³ eternal forms is nothing but Sādhana for this great Siddhi. When by virtue of Siddhi in Sādhana, by means of the Śakti (all full of consciousness), of Mahāmantra, the Sādhaka sees the Tattvas of the play of the Creation, Preservation, and Destruction of endless millions of universes shining in Her Fair body from Her feet to Her head, then only do the great portals, which are the loss of oneself in Mahābhāva for Her, open before that fortunate Sādhaka. This is why to the Sādhaka nothing is at that time so effective in awakening great love, drawing out the feeling of attachment, soothing the eyes, filling the heart with bliss, and pouring nectar into the inmost recesses of the heart, as the evidence of that vast play manifested as movements of every limb of the Mother in the refulgence of Her World-enchancing beauty. It is only when the Sādhaka's eyes are painted with the collyrium of this attachment that the refulgence of the beauty, resembling a mass of crushed black collyrium, of the Fair Spouse of Mahākāla shines in every bank of clouds. The light of Her who charms the Blue-throated Deva⁴ beams through the blue throat of the peacock, and the endless waves of the beauty of Śyāmā flow in the deeply blue petals of fresh and full-blown blue lotuses, and in the soft and bright blue beauty of Aparājita⁵ flowers. Then it is that the Sādhaka loses himself at sight of the mystery of the

existence of consciousness and bliss. For this reason in the Śāstra the Guru of the world has Himself commanded that for the attainment of the state of self-loss in this Mahābhāva such signs and marks should be worn on the body not merely during worship, but at all times. And it is according to His command that five different kinds of dress, forehead marks,¹ and so forth, have been ordained for the five classes of worshippers—namely, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura, Śākta, and Gāṇapatya. These are—three lines on the forehead,² trident, ashes, matted hair, Rudrākṣa³ beads, tiger skin, Ḍamaru,⁴ human skull, and so forth, for Śaivas; a high line on the forehead,⁵ yellow or white dress, marks of conch-shell, discus, club and lotus, rosary of Tulaśī,⁶ dots of sandal paste on the face,⁷ and so forth, for Vaiṣṇavas; red circular forehead mark, red dress, rosary of lotus seeds, and so forth, for Sauras;⁸ yellow or red dress, three red lines on the forehead, Sarpasūtra,⁹ Yogadaṇḍa,¹⁰ and so forth, for Gāṇapatyas;¹¹ and crescent moon-shaped mark with vermilion Kuṅkuma,¹² red sandal and the rest, yantra-shaped forehead mark, dishevelled hair, red dress, trident, and so forth, for Śāktas. All these are nothing but instances of ordinances passed in conformity with the great saying, “A Deva alone should worship a Deva.”¹³ Whether visibly, or in work, or in body, or in Śakti—in short, in every way—a Sādhaka must be full of the power and manifestations¹⁴ of the Devatā he worships. It is no wonder that such men as disparage worship and so forth of Devatā should regard forehead marks, three-line marks,¹⁵ ashes, red dress, Tulaśī, rosaries of Rudrākṣa beads, and so forth, as visible marks of hypocrisy. But how regrettable is it that such as daily perform worship and so forth yet often think that the wearing of forehead

marks, three-line marks, and the like, is only another form of accepting flowers, sandal paste, and other things offered to the Devatā¹; so that it is enough to wear them as little as possible, and wholly unnecessary to make oneself ridiculous in the eyes of the educated community by decking oneself out as a master-stripes, with the body smeared all over with ashes or sandal paste. Some people, again, think that religion or worship of Īśvara are matters of the spirit,² and therefore there is no necessity for external marks. Some believe that forehead marks and the like are a form of advertisement, in order to tell people that "I have become religious." According to another view, the wearing of forehead marks, rosaries, and so forth, is but illustration of one's shamelessness and stupidity. Seeing different persons hold such different views, many people become, despite their faith, ashamed to wear such marks in the view of educated men. We may praise such people as become so ashamed on the score of their modesty, but we are astonished at the sight of the shamelessness of their sense of shame. Or perhaps the sense of shame within them is so greatly ashamed that no such shame is expressed without. Strange, indeed, are the religious faith and devotion to Devatā of these who even in the matter of the worship of Iṣṭadevatā become afraid or anxious because of what other people may think or say about them. Why should such shameless men, who have neither the strength to bear personally what others say nor to remedy it, talk of Siddhi and Sādhana? Or perhaps it is that Siddhi and Sādhana are not their object, and therefore they do not perform Sandhyā prayers and worship. We do not know how to make them understand, but we ourselves are anxious to discover how we can understand them. Why should they

these animals really want to satisfy their ferocious instinct on men wherever they meet them? If so, they must have some interest in doing so. But what is this interest? Whether we see it in a gross visible form or not, Nature's inscrutable law is that there must be some interest which underlies and prompts action. We cannot, of course, say that this law explains their action as a means of satisfying their ferocious instinct, but this much we can say—that it is an effort at self-defence under the garb of ferocity. Ferocity is desire to kill. Among beasts, birds, insects, flies, and other lower animals, and even among men of their nature, gratification of this instinct to kill mostly exists where the killed is to be the food of the killer, or where it is possible that that which is to be killed would, if alive, have affected any interest of the killer. Where there is no interference with such interest, but there is the possibility of personal safety being in jeopardy, there also we may see the gratification of such instinct. The sight of man inspires birds, beasts, and other lower animals with fear for their safety. Even if man does not show any intention of doing harm to them, his very presence fills their minds with great fear. They therefore try to get rid of that fear by frightening him in their turn. This is why they leap and jump, grunt and roar, frown and fury at his sight. This vast Universe-Kingdom is ever governed by the infallible rule of Dharma.¹ Under this rule each one is ever engaged in the performance of individual duty. Even the heart of the most ferocious ruffian, who fears neither the punishment of the King nor the community in which he lives, nor indeed anybody in the world, yet in the end trembles with fear of Dharma. Such is the incomparably great and universe-subduing power of Dharma that before

right, thinks himself blessed by the service of jealousy and malice. Everyone in the Samsāra is not unrighteous, whether he is able to serve Dharma fully or not. On the contrary, Society and Samsāra are full of men who are truly sorry at their inability to duly serve Dharma. In the present state of society it is difficult to find among one hundred men even ten who duly carry out their religious duties.¹ I may not be able to observe these practices myself, but if I see anyone doing so, as the Śāstra enjoins, I respect and honour him, while if I find anyone who is, like myself, devoid of such practices, I hate him with all my heart, as I hate nobody else. In this way practising men² who wear the sacred crown lock,³ and thread,⁴ forehead marks,⁵ carry rosaries, and so forth, rightly occupy a high position in society. The arrogant class, devoid of such practices, should fall low, and are, as a matter of fact, doing so. The true man of practice never, even in his dreams, thinks that his honour and glory should be widespread in Society; but the universe-enchanting great Śakti of Dharma, appears of itself in the body of a religious man, and overpowers by its force even beasts and birds, not to speak of men and women. Men and women bow at his feet of their own accord, and show him honour and respect. At the sight of this honour and respect the eyes of self-willed men, devoid of good practice are pierced as if by an arrow. But while, on the one hand, Nature's rules cannot be thwarted, on the other men of beastly nature cannot bear the sight. It is then that, finding no other available means, the community of self-willed men, proud of their education, begins to vituperate, rail at, and ridicule the religious man's forehead marks, rosaries, dress, and so forth. The object of this railing and vituperation is not

served; for theirs is the victory if "all brothers" become "equal". They are saved from all fear if no one by any sign or acts reminds them of Dharma in any way.

Now, I ask you, O Sādhaka! do you wish to abandon that at which you aim in Sādhana out of fear of these great heroes? Do you really count as men the cowards who lick the feet of beastly propensities and manifest their meanness at every step? If a beast were to threaten you, would you, out of fear, give up the wearing of dresses that befit a man? The difference between a man and a beast is the same as that between a Sādhaka and a man who is devoted to the Samsāra. It is out of consideration for your human state that the Śāstra has given you the privilege of ascending to the high step of Devahood. If to-day you spurn the good fortune which is within the reach of your hand, and become a beast in imitation of beasts, then why all this trouble to attain that human birth which is rare even for Devas? Why this downfall after receiving initiation in the Mantra of the supreme Devatā? Why, being a son of the Queen of Queens, do you roam about forests in the company of beasts? True it is that you are afraid of beasts; but consider what we have said, and say whether it is really you who are afraid of beasts, or the beasts who are afraid of you? Everyone knows that Akrūra was afraid of Kamsa;¹ but think just for once whether it was really Akrūra who was afraid of Kamsa, or Kamsa who was afraid of Akrūra. It is true that the wearing of forehead marks, rosaries, religious dresses, and so forth, by Akrūra was insufferable to Kamsa, but what answer would you give to the question, Why were they insufferable to him? Had not the daughter² of the King of mountains,³ the sister of

mere mention of Kāla (blackness)? In that case would the terrible order of Kamsa¹ for the oppression of Devas and Brāhmaṇas and the killing of infants been proclaimed in Mathurā? Would he have suddenly, looking like a madman, left his throne and rushed out, crying: "Kill! kill"? Hence I say, think for once whether the frightful appearance which Kamsa used to display to Bhagavān and the devotees of Bhagavān was intended really to frighten Bhagavān, or to save himself from fear of Bhagavān. The Asura² knew and yet knew not the Bhagavān,³ so that in terror befitting an Asura he tried to save himself from his hand. Kamsa was an enemy of Bhagavān. Consequently, devotees to Bhagavān also became objects of his enmity, for a devotee's body, senses, mind, and heart are marked and ornamented with signs of devotion to Bhagavān. The sight of these marks used to make the Asura's heart tremble with fear. But did the sight of this fear of Kamsa frighten Akrūra, the crest-gem of devotees? In order to remove all causes for fear, either from men, Kamsa, or existence itself, Akrūra brought Bhagavān, who is the fear of fear itself, from Brindavan to the residence of Kamsa, and thus provided the means of freeing Kamsa from all fears in this and the next world.⁴ Had Akrūra been really afraid of Kamsa, and had there been any malice against Kamsa at the root of this fear on the part of Akrūra, would he have brought the Friend of the World⁵ from Brindāvan to Mathurā, and thus performed an act of eternal friendship to Kamsa, both here and hereafter?⁶

Kamsa may have entertained malicious feelings against forehead marks and rosaries and the name of Kṛṣṇa, but it was because there was at Mathurā a person⁷ who had incurred his displeasure by wearing those

be able to do so through the influence of forehead marks and rosaries, and in no other way.

Sādhakas will doubtless fully understand from all that we have said so far that forehead marks, three lines, and other signs of Dharma which the Śāstra ordains to be worn by Sādhakas on different parts of their bodies, are the chief materials for the attainment¹ of the state in which they are merged in Mahābhāva. The wearing or non-wearing of these outer marks may not matter to the great man who has sunk in the depths of Bhāva, but the non-wearing of them by people whose minds have not been matured in Sādhana, or who are about to enter upon its path, is undoubtedly the sole obstacle which prevents the opening of the door of Mahābhāva for their incoming. It is the mature state of this Bhāva which is called the state of merger in the object of worship—that is to say, self-forgetfulness at the sight of the manifestation of the Self² of the worshipped Devatā in one's mind, heart, body, and Ātmā, and in all the things of this visible Universe. The sole cause of the attainment of Siddhi in this state of absorption is Mantraśakti.³ Materials of worship, and so forth, are all means whereby we may directly realize this Mantraśakti. Sādhakas acquainted with the principles relating to worship of course know how perfection of the state of merger in Bhāva appears in the person of a Sādhaka through the influence of Mantraśakti. Nevertheless, in order to give some knowledge to those who are eager to perform Sādhana, we are here bound to shortly indicate the lines along which the system works.

of the house of worship, next at its southern door, then at its western door, and lastly at its northern door, and then worship his Iṣṭadevatā inside the Yantra." ¹

In the Gandharva Tantra it is said: "If the Sādhaka is unable to construct a house with four doors or perform worship at four doors, he should at one door mentally imagine there are four, and there worship the Devatā of the four doors."

In the Śivārcanacandrikā it is said: "A house of Yajña should be entered with the right foot."

In the Meru Tantra it is said: "A Devatā's house should be entered by advancing the right foot first."

In the third Paṭala of the Sammohana Tantra it is said: "Walking with great care,² a Sādhaka should enter a house of worship with the right foot first."

In the eighth Chapter of the Gautama Tantra it is said: "Driving away spirits³ and meditating on Viṣṇu in his heart a Sādhaka should enter into a house of Sādhana with his right foot first and with his head bowed."

In another Tantra it is said: "A Sādhaka should enter a house of worship meditating on the lotus-feet of the Devī in his heart, with his left⁴ foot first and touching the door slightly with his left side; that is to say, leaning towards the right side of the door, which is the left side of the Sādhaka, instead of passing just through its middle."

In the Tripurāṇava it is said: "One should enter a house of Yajña by advancing the left foot first."

water sanctified ¹ with the Astra Mantra,² and terrestrial obstacles by three taps with the heel of his foot."

In the third Paṭala of the Sammohana Tantra it is said: "On entering into the house a good Sādhaka should look at the articles for worship and next dispel divine obstacles by his divine look, obstacles in the middle spaces of the sky by means of water sanctified ¹ with the Astra Mantra,² and terrestrial obstacles by three taps on the earth with the heel of his foot."

The eighth Paṭala of the Gandharva Tantra deals with divine vision, and says: "A Sādhaka will become of good mind by looking with an angry look."

In the second Paṭala of the Viśvasāra Tantra it is said: "Divine look ³ is the name given to that steady gaze in which there is no twinkling of the eye."

In the fifth Prakāśa of the Meru Tantra it is said: "Divine obstacles should be removed by looking obliquely."⁴

Taking these dicta together, we can arrive at the conclusion that "divine look" is the name for an angry, oblique look, without twinkling of the eye.

In the Kālikulāmrta Tantra it is said: "Terrestrial obstacles should be removed by three taps with the heel of the left foot."

In Somaśambhu, quoted by Rāghava Bhatta,⁵ it is said: "Terrestrial obstacles should be removed by three taps with the heel of the right foot."

The two contradictory dicta are reconciled in the following way: whether in entering the room or stamping with the heel, worshippers of Devas should extend the right foot first and tap with the heel of the right

SEAT ¹

In the seventh Paṭala of the Gandharva Tantra it is said: "Next, the Sādhaka should take a seat neither low nor too high. He should never use a seat or an Arghya vessel ² which is broken.

"On a seat made of the skin of black deer a Sādhaka attains liberation, and on a seat made of tiger skin a Sādhaka attains both wealth and liberation. In a rite done to attain some desire a woollen seat ³ is the best—a red woollen seat being particularly suited for the attainment of the desired object. A seat of Kuśa grass leads to attainment of Siddhi in Mantra, and in rites undertaken for the purpose of killing ⁴ a black woollen seat, and in the worship of Tripurasundarī a red woollen seat is the best seat. A seat for use in worship must not be more than two cubits in length, one and a half cubits in breadth, and three fingers in thickness. As regards the seat of deer skin and tiger skin which grant Siddhi, as spoken above, a Sādhaka may use them in any way he pleases, for there is no rule which limits their dimensions. A householder, even if he be initiated, should never sit on a skin of a black deer (in the Yoginīhṛdaya it is said that Yatīs, those belonging to the Vānaprastha Āśrama, Brahmacārīs, and Bikṣus, alone are competent to sit on the skin of a black deer).⁵ Earthen seats cause sorrow, and wooden seats bring ill-luck. Seats of the wood of mango, Nimba,⁶ and Kadamba ⁷ trees in particular, bring destruction of family. Seats of the wood of Vakula, Kingśuka, and Jack-fruit trees, cause loss of all property. Seats made of bamboo, brick, wood, earth, grass, and twigs, are the cause of poverty, disease, and sorrow.

also may be used),¹ and if wooden and woollen seats are used together, Sādhakas not only fail to acquire future religious merit,² but also lose all merits acquired in the past. Considering all this, a Sādhaka should secure as best a seat as he can for his use."

In the Hamsa-Maheśvara it is said: "If a Sādhaka sits on hair, all his religious merits² are destroyed. The very touch of hair instantly spoils Siddhi. A Sādhaka should, therefore, make his seat of skin denuded of hair."

In the Kālikā Purāṇa it is said: "One should never use seats made of iron, or brass, or lead. In worship it is best for a Sādhaka to use a seat of stone, or gems,³ or precious metals.⁴ Worship of Devatās, even when the Sādhaka is in water, should be done when seated on seats, and not in a standing posture. In water, seats of stone, Kuśa grass, wood, or metals should be used, and of no other material. In the absence of a seat of any of these kinds, one should imagine such a seat in the water itself; consecrate it as a seat, and then worship the Devatā in the water."

In the Kāmadhenu Tantra it is said: "All the Japa, worship, and so forth, become fruitless of him who spreads a seat in a Tīrtha, and performs Japa and so forth sitting on it. The statement that the hardness of earth is due to the mass of the fat of Mahiṣāsura's body⁵ (and is, consequently, unclean),¹ applies to places other than Tīrthas." (Fat of the body of Mahiṣāsura is most probably a clerical error for fat of the bodies of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, or it may have been the fat of Mahiṣāsura in some other Kalpa.)¹

In the thirty-first Paṭala of the same Tantra it is said: "A good

is aware of the particulars of all these postures. Of the aforesaid eighty-four lakhs of seated postures, two are the best—namely, the Siddha seat (Siddhāsana) first and the lotus seat (Kamalāsana) next. (As these seats are not used in worship and such other rites, we desist from dwelling on their characteristic peculiarities here.)¹”

Rāghava Bhaṭṭa says: “Japa, worship, and so forth, should be performed sitting in postures, such as Padma, Svastika, Vīra, and so forth,² otherwise they will be ineffectual.”

In another Tantra quoted by Rāghava Bhaṭṭa it is said: “Place the left foot on the right and the right foot on the left, gird up the loins and heels, and fix the gaze at the tip of the nose. To sit in this way is the Padma seat, adored of all Sādhakas (1).”

In the eighth Chapter of the Gautamīya it is said: “The two feet should be placed well on the two thighs. This is the Padma seat, beloved of Yogīs.”

In the second Paṭala of the Sammohana Tantra it is said: “A Yogī should sit with a straight back, crossing his feet.³ This is called Svastika seat (2).”

“A Yogī should sit with a straight back, keeping one of his feet on the ground and placing his other foot on the thigh of that foot. This is called Vīra seat.” Although the Śāstrīk authority does not say which foot should be on the ground, it has been the practice among successive generations of adepts⁴ to keep the left foot down and place the right foot on the left thigh (3).

In the third Paṭala of the Sammohana Tantra it is said: “O Devī!

the Sādhaka should be the south, the left side north, and the back west. In every case these directions should be adopted in performing worship." That is to say, although the directions are fixed according to the rising and the setting sun, the direction which the Sādhaka faces in performing worship is the east. For there is no such thing as an absolute direction in the world, all directions being relative to the positions of the individual. The term "direction" itself proves this sufficiently. "That which is merely directed or pointed out is called direction." For instance, that which I call my east will be directed or pointed out as west by a person who is to the east of me. Hence it is quite plain that direction exists in respect of an individual and not absolutely. But, blinded by the vanity of philosophic wisdom, some people do not see this derivative meaning of direction, but speak of the existence of absolute directions. Essentially, however, there is no such thing as direction; but whatever direction is pointed out at any time is direction at that time. If directions are fixed according to the rising and setting of the sun, they are the same for all people, and the pointing out of a direction by one person settles it for all.

For the reasons given above, the Śāstra has said in the Bhāvacūḍa-maṇi: "O Devī! according to the desire of a Sādhaka the Devatā appears in all directions (for Her who is Omnipresent it is impossible that there should be either front or back). Still, one should perform a worship¹ and other ritual acts at night, facing the north.² In worshipping Śiva in particular, one should always take care to face the north, whether during day or in the night. As regards worship and so forth relating to Viṣṇu, it is best to face the east, though it is not improper to face the north. As

In Haribhaktivilāsa it is said: "A worshipper of Śrī Kṛṣṇa should generally sit facing the east during day, and in the night a Sādhaka, with composed countenance, should perform worship and so forth, facing the north.

"Worship and so forth should be performed sitting, facing the north or east in front of the image of Devatā." That is to say, if the established Devatā¹ is facing the west, the Sādhaka should face the east, and if the Devatā is facing the south, the Sādhaka should face the north.

In the Kālikā Purāṇa it is said: "Of all the quarters the north pleases the Spouse of Śiva. A Sādhaka should, therefore, always sit facing the north in the worship of Caṇḍikā."

In the Śāktānandatarangiṇī it is said: "Worship of Devas should be performed facing the east during the day and facing the north in the night, but worship of the Devī and worship of Śiva should always be performed facing the north."

TIME FOR WORSHIP

In the twenty-eighth Paṭala of the Gandharva Tantra it is said: "After receiving initiation from Guru in accordance with the injunctions a good Sādhaka should daily worship the Devī in the morning with undivided heart."

In the second Paṭala of the Yoginī Tantra it is said: "He who desires to reap a full crop of fruits from his rites should begin them in the morning and finish them all by noon."

In the eleventh Paṭala of the Nigamakalpalatā it is said: "The daily

windy, infested with other animals, covered with dust or mud, where beasts are near by,¹ treeless, at a distance from water, open on all sides,² or unpleasant to the worshipper.³ Worship should not be performed in even a holy place if its soil is saline or infested with insects." The above is an account of places, the use of which for Yajña is prohibited. Below is given an account of places which are recommended for use in Yajña:

"O Mahādevī! a place for the performance of Yajña by a Sādhaka should possess the following characteristics: It should be near to a tank, or well, in a garden of flowers, having a beautiful temple⁴ on it, with a clean altar, furnished with articles for drinking and eating, perfumed with camphor, sandal, incense, and so forth; bright red like the rays of the morning sun, pleasant, delightful to the mind, containing all the weapons of Devatā and a well-furnished inner house.⁵

"The best places are holy grounds,⁶ river-sides, caves, Tīrthas, summits of mountains, confluences of rivers, holy forests, solitary gardens, at the foot of bael-trees, valleys, places overgrown with Tulaśī plants, pasture lands, temples of Śiva without a bull, at the foot of Aśvattha,⁷ Āmalaki⁸ trees, cowsheds, islands, temples, seashore, one's own house, the abode of Guru, places which naturally tend to generate single pointedness of mind, places free of animals and solitary. If a Sādhaka performs worship in solitude at any place, the Devī Herself accepts the leaves, flowers, fruits, and water offered by him. If the Sādhaka has sufficient reverence and devotion, if there are sufficient articles for worship, and if the worship is performed in solitude, the Mother of the world who is attached to Her devotees appears of Her own will at such a place."

and then worships Śiva, all the fruits of that worship are devoured by Yakṣas and Rākṣasas.”¹

Śiva's words in the sixty-fourth Paṭala of the Utpatti Tantra are as follows: “How can a Śākta,² or a Vaiṣṇava,³ a Śaiva,² or a Gāṇapatya,² attain Siddhi if he does not worship Śiva? O Devī! if a person worships another Devatā without first worshipping Me, that worshipped Devatā does not accept his worship, but returns to Her own seat, having cursed him. O Devī! O Maheśvarī!³ whatever in the way of flowers, Naivedya⁴ and so forth, from even a mountain heap of sweetmeats duly arranged, fruits and all sorts of flowers gathered as prescribed, and of all kinds of food heaped as high as Mount Sumeru, and quantities of curry and so forth as great as great seas, are offered without first worshipping Śiva will be unacceptable as excrements. In the Kali age, whoever worships another Devatā without first worshipping Śiva is guilty of a great sin.”

In the first Paṭala of the Lingārcana Tantra it is said: “O Parameśvarī! everyone, be he a Śākta, Vaiṣṇava, or Śaiva, should first worship Śiva with bael-leaves, then pray for His permission to worship other Devatās, and afterwards worship them. Otherwise, Maheśvarī! without worship of Śiva everything will be as unacceptable as excrements. O Parameśvarī!³ so long as one lives on earth, one should daily worship Śivaliṅga,⁵ which is Brahman with supreme devotion.”

In the twelfth Paṭala of the Mātrkābheda Tantra it is said: “The Devatās who are within this Universe, as well as those who are without it, are all gratified if only Śiva is worshipped.”

In the Mahāliṅgeśvara Tantra it is said: “A Sādhaka, whoever he may

In the Meru Tantra it is said: "All Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, and Anuloma¹ half-castes, should ever worship Śivaliṅga with care and with Mantras special to its worship."

In the Yājñavalkya Samhitā it is said: "By worshipping a single Bāṇaliṅga² a man reaps the fruits of worshipping ten million other Liṅgas. Constructing an altar (Gaurīpīṭha)³ with copper, crystal, gold, stone, or silver, one should establish a Bāṇaliṅga on the Pīṭha⁴ and then worship it. Even liberation, not to speak of worldly gain, comes within the grasp of him who worships Bāṇaliṅga daily with devotion."

In the Viramitrodaya it is said: "A householder should not worship a Bāṇaliṅga which is very small, or very large, or brown. A Bāṇaliṅga shining and deeply dark like a black bee is the best for worship by a householder. A Bāṇaliṅga, whether it is with Pīṭha (Gaurīpīṭha)⁵ or without Pīṭha, should be worshipped even without purification or so forth by means of Mantras. Every Bāṇaliṅga, whether it exists in a palace or in a Pīṭha, grants Siddhi and liberation to the Sādhaka.

"O great King! none of the Bāṇaliṅgas existing on this earth require Prāṇapratiṣṭhā,⁶ purification,⁷ or the invocation or dismissal of Devatā.⁸ (In the eternally established Brahmaliṅga, Bhagavān the Creator of all things is eternally present, so that both invocation and dismissal are impossible in respect of it.)"

In the first Paṭala of the Liṅgārcana Tantra it is said: "Beloved One! the country in which the Liṅga is not always worshipped is as degraded as a trenching-ground. If Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, and Vaiśyas do not worship the Liṅga, they will at once become Caṇḍālas.⁹ And if Śūdras

after another speak of the differences between the five forms of worship—namely, Abhigamana, Upādāna, Yoga, Svādhyāya, and Ijyā.¹

“To go to the house of Devatā, cleanse the place where the Devatā is seated, and remove from the person of the image the pastes, flowers, garlands, and so forth attached to it. This is called Abhigamana. Upādāna is the name given to the cutting of flowers and the like and the collecting of materials such as incense, sandal, and so forth. Ijyā is the name for the worship of the Iṣṭadevatā, with offerings of materials such as Pādhyā² and so forth, accompanied by Mantras, according to the Śāstra after Bhūtaśuddhi,³ Prāṇāyāma,⁴ Nyāsa,⁵ mental worship, and so forth. Svādhyāya is the name given to the doing of Japa according to the Śāstra of the great Mantra, consisting of the name ‘Kṛṣṇa,’ reading its Sūkta,⁶ Stotra,⁶ singing the name of Hari, and studying the spiritual Śāstra, in their respective order. Yoga is the meditation of Iṣṭadevatā in one’s mind. O man of good deeds! these are the five forms of worship. They grant the fruits of Sāmīpya, Sārūpya, Sādṛśya, and Sāyujya in succession: ⁷ Abhigamana and Upādāna grant Sāmīpya, Ijyā grants Sādṛśyā, Svādhyāya grants Sārūpya, and Yoga grants Sāyujya.”

(The Gautamīya Tantra ordains worship of Viṣṇu. Consequently, it speaks of Japa of the Mantra, consisting of the name of Kṛṣṇa, and singing of the name of Hari. But this is merely an indication of a Sādhaka’s duty relating to his Iṣṭadevatā, be he a worshipper of Śakti or of Śiva, or of any other Devatā. Sādhakas other than Vaiṣṇavas will understand the Japa of the name of Kṛṣṇa, and singing the name of Hari to stand for Japa of the names of their individual Iṣṭadevatās, and singing of their names.)

CHAPTER XX

CEREMONIAL WORSHIP (*Contd.*)

PURIFICATION OF THE " FIVE " ¹

IN the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: " O Devī! so long as a Sādhaka does not carry out the five forms of purification, how can he perform worship of a Devatā? These are Purification of self (Ātmaśuddhi), of place (Sthānaśuddhi), of Mantra (Mantraśuddhi), of articles for worship (Dravyaśuddhi), and of Devatā (Devaśuddhi). Worship without purification of the five is intended only for abhicāra.²

" 1. Purification of the self of the Sādhaka consists of proper bathing, purification of the elements (Bhūtaśuddhi), breath-exercises (Prāṇāyāma), and so forth, and Nyāsa of six parts of the body (Ṣaḍaṅganyāsa), and all other forms of Nyāsa.³

" 2. Purification of place is making the house of worship as clean as the centre of a mirror by dusting, wiping, and so forth, and adorning it with auspicious ornaments, such as powders of five colours, with seat, canopy, incense, lamp, flowers, garlands, and so forth.

“ 5. Purification of Devatā is the placing of the image of the Devatā on the Pīṭha,¹ invoking the Śakti of the Devatā into it by means of Antra-mantra, Prāṇamantra² and so forth, then bathing it (at least)³ thrice along with recital of Mūlamantra,⁴ and finally adorning it with garments, ornaments, and the like, and offering incense, light, and so forth. These five forms of purification must be performed first, and then the worship should be commenced.”

PURIFICATION OF THE “ TWELVE ”⁵

In the eighth Chapter of the Gautamīya Tantra it is said: “ Next is related the method of purification of the twelve, as followed by Vaiṣṇavas. Purification of feet (2)⁶ by Vaiṣṇavas is the use of the feet in such blessed acts as going to the house of Bhagavān, following Bhagavān in Yātrās⁷ and festivals, and circling⁸ round Bhagavān with devotion. The purification of hands (2), which is done by taking leaves, flowers, and so forth, in the hands with devotion, for the worship of Bhagavān is better than any other form of their purification. Purification of (the tongue or) speech (1) is produced by singing with devotion the name, beauty, and qualities of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Purification of the ears (2) is caused by hearing recitals of Bhagavān’s play and qualities; and purification of the eyes (2) is produced by the seeing of festivals in honour of His name. Purification of the head (1) is caused by placing on the head water touched by Bhagavān’s foot,⁹ and flowers, garlands, and so forth, offered to Bhagavān, and by bowing to Bhagavān’s lotus-feet. Purification of the nostrils (2) is

Śākta, and other worshippers should understand the above as an indication of that which should be done in respect of their individual Iṣṭadevatās.) ”

In the sixth Ullāsa of the Śāktānandatarāṅgiṇī it is said: “ After performing purification of hands with flowers, sandal paste, and such other things, one should fence the quarters ¹ by clapping the hands thrice, higher and higher,² saying the weapon Mantra,³ and snapping the fingers ⁴ ten times. Then, after having removed all obstacles and purified the flowers and so forth, make obeisance to the three Gurus ⁵ on the left side.”

In Tantra it is said: ⁶ “ One should make obeisance to Guru, Parama Guru, and Parāpara Guru on the left side, to Gaṇeśa on the right side, and to one’s Iṣṭadevatā on the head.”

PURIFICATION OF ELEMENTS ⁷

In the Gandharva Tantra it is said: “ It is by virtue of purification of elements ⁷ Ṛṣi-nyāsa, Piṭhanyāsa, Nyāsa of six parts of the body, Nyāsa of hands, Mātrkānyāsa, and Vidyānyāsa, that a Sādhaka becomes full of the Deity, and these are the Nyāsas ⁸ which must be performed daily. All other Nyāsas are said to be Nyāsas for the attainment of some particular desired end.” ⁹

In the same Tantra it is again said: “ It is by virtue of control of breath,¹⁰ meditation,¹¹ and Nyāsa, that a Sādhaka attains a Divine body. Abundance of Nyāsa makes the worship bear abundance of fruits.

¹ Digbandhana.

² The palm of the left hand is struck with the forefinger and middle finger.

O Maheśvarī; a Jīva's body constituted of five elements, and ever associated with faeces and urine, is in its very nature unclean. In order that this unclean body may be purified, it is dried up by means of Vāyumantra,¹ and burnt and reduced to ashes by means of Agnimantra.²

"A shower of nectar³ is caused by means of Candramantra,⁴ and a flooding of water by means of Varuṇamantra.⁵ The five elements composing the body must be purified by contact with unmanifested Brahman, brought about by means of Recaka, Pūraka, and Kumbhaka of breath,⁶ with the help of the said Mantras. This is called 'purification of elements'. After performing purification of elements in this manner, one should place Arghyas⁷ and such other things, and next perform Mātṛkānyāsa, Mantran-yāsa, breath-control,⁸ and R̥ṣinyāsa."⁹

Purification of elements is accomplished by inner Yajña¹⁰ and Prāṇāyāma⁹ together. Inner Yajña is accomplished in this way. Mother¹¹ Kulakuṇḍalinī, the World Consciousness¹² living in the womb of the Mūlādhāra lotus, is awakened. She is taken along the Suṣumnā path, piercing on the way throughout the six Cakras Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, and Ājñā. She and the Jīvātmā residing in the heart are united with the supreme Tattva of Paramaśiva residing in the petals of the thousand-petalled lotus Sahasrāra. The Māyik elements¹³ of the phenomenal Māyik world are merged in the Parobrahmatattva of Śivaśakti. The elemental products¹⁴ are the twenty-four Tattvas of earth, water, fire, air, ether, smell, taste, sight, touch, sound, nose, tongue, eye, ear, skin, voice, hand, foot, anus, genitals, Manas, Ahaṅkāra, Buddhi, and Prakṛti. The Sādhaka thinks to himself that in their Māyik existence they exist as seed¹⁵ and thus meditates on the seed. The seed is the

after re-awaking the dualistic Tattvas from their supreme union or undifferentiated non-dualistic Tattva of Śakti and possessor of Śakti or Prakṛti and Puruṣa, be re-established in Her own place in the womb of the Mūlādhāra lotus, and there united with Svayambhuśiva.

Next, in order to perform the outer worship of Her as Iṣṭadevatā, a new and purified body must be constructed, composed of Mantra—that is to say, illumined with the Brahman-spirit of Mantraśakti, the substance of which is Brahman-vibhūti¹ only. Finally, the outer worship of Iṣṭadevatā with Nyāsa and so forth on that body must be commenced after re-establishing, in their own places as ingredients and materials for the worship of the Mother of the world, the five elements of earth and so forth, and the elemental Śaktis (force), all existing in subtle forms.

Though we know that inner Yajña, or penetration of the six Cakras, forms a part of purification of elements, we do not dare enter into the subject here in this short Chapter, which explains the principles of worship.² Because, firstly, the subject is so extensive that even another treatise of the same volume as this book would be insufficient for even such explanation as a person of such insignificant intellect as we are could by our best efforts give. Secondly, it is impossible to make the public understand the meaning of the six Cakras, since it is not possible for anybody who is not a practising Sādhaka to understand them with the help of any amount of interpretation, however great his intellect and learning may be. Thirdly, an explanation of the subject of the six Cakras should properly be given by a Guru to his Śiṣya, for the Guru has, by communicating from his own body a Divine Śakti (power) into his Śiṣya's body, opened the path for the communication of Śakti between the two bodies. It is possible

explaining, and showing the necessity for the Mantras and so forth of the Devatās presiding over the pericarps, centres, filaments, stalks, leaves, and so forth, of those lotuses. Acting under the command from our Gurudeva, and in accordance with my own views, I have never as yet publicly mentioned these Bijamantras and so forth, and shall never mention them publicly. For this reason we are obliged to desist from entering into an explanation, although we would have been very glad to do so if we could. Fourthly, even if one is to offer an explanation, it will not only in no way render any help to the community of Sādhakas, but will also be likely to greatly injure them both here and hereafter. For it is the command of Bhagavān Bhairavanātha¹ Himself, the Īśvara of the Tantra Śāstra, that whoever advances in the path of the six Cakras without the help of the shadow of Guru's fair feet is likely to fall into great danger at every step. Knowing all this, we desist from doing a thing which will lead to the ruin of both ourselves and others. We hope that Sādhakas will realize that we have done this for their good also. Of course, one may try to explain the fundamental principles of Bija Mantras and so forth by hints and suggestions, and using symbolical words, signs, and so forth. But, firstly, this is throwing dust in the eyes of Dharma;² and, secondly, it is very difficult to say what space such an explanation would take. Now that the "Tantratattva" has come so near its end, it would be sheer madness to undertake so uncertain and extensive a task. Moreover, we do not believe that every subscriber or reader of the "Tantratattva" is a true Sādhaka. If we learn that the publication of such a book is necessary for the Community of Sādhakas only who receive their information from trustworthy sources and successive generations of Gurus, and if both these conditions

Sagarbhaprāṇāyāma is that which is performed along with Japa of Mantra, and Nigarbhaprāṇāyāma is that which is performed without any Mantra, and only according to counts.¹ O man of good deeds! there is no Tattva, no Tapas, knowledge, state, Yoga, treasure, or other thing superior to Prāṇāyāma.² One is sure to meet Brahman by the Yoga, which consists of the practice of Prāṇāyāma continuously for one year. It is undoubted that by dint of Prāṇāyāma alone all the Māyik envelope of Paramātmā who is consciousness itself, is destroyed. There is no path to liberation besides Prāṇāyāma, so that whatever Sādhana is performed without Prāṇāyāma becomes fruitless. It is by having recourse to Prāṇāyāma that Munis have attained Siddhi, and a Yogī who is attached to Prāṇāyāma is no mere Yogī, but Śiva Himself. Men learned in the Yoga Śāstra have given the name Prāṇāyāma to the process which consists of inspiration, expiration, and retention of the vital air.³ The word "Prāṇa" means breath, and "Āyāma" means its control.⁴ That is Prāṇāyāma, the Yogī's instrument for Yoga, by which the Prāṇavāyu (vital air) is checked. Yogīs practise this Prāṇāyāma by holding their nostrils at the beginning as well as the end of Yoga. Air should be breathed out by means of the right nostril, breathed in by means of the left nostril, and retained with Japa of Mantra thirty-two times, by holding both the nostrils. This is called "Prāṇāyāma." By force of this Prāṇāyāma a Brāhmaṇa can speedily burn all sins, such as Brāhminicide, drinking of wine, incest, and so forth. Great sins, such as foeticide, are destroyed by a practice of Prāṇāyāma for a single month.

"The Prāṇāyāma-practising Yogī who daily practises Prāṇāyāma sixteen times in the morning and sixteen times in the evening destroys all his sin

Mantras of Outer Mātrkā should be made, in order, on the forehead, face, eyes, ears, nostrils, cheeks, lips, teeth, head, mouth, hands, feet, joints,¹ sides, back, navel, belly, heart, shoulders, and from heart to hands, from heart to feet, from heart to belly, and from heart to face.

If the Mātrka Mantras² are placed in the reverse order, then the Mātrkā is called Samhāra Mātrkā; and if they are set forth in the order of the places of their origin from Śrī-Kaṇṭha³ downwards, then it is called Śrī-Kaṇṭhādi-Mātrkā.

Mudrā for Nyāsa of Mātrkā

“The Nyāsa should be performed mentally or with flowers, or with the thumb and the third finger.”

In the Gautamiya Tantra it is said: “Mātrkā is of four classes—namely, Kevala (plain) Mātrkā, Mātrkā with Bindu (·), Mātrkā with Visarga (:), and Mātrkā with both Bindu and Visarga. Kevala Mātrkā grants Vidyā (learning), Mātrkā with both Bindu and Visarga grants Bhoga (enjoyment), Mātrkā with Visarga grants sons, and Mātrkā with Bindu grants liberation. Whoever performs this Mātrkā-nyāsa, which grants wealth, fame, and longevity, and destroys the evils of the Kali age, acquires the Vibhūti⁴ of Sadāśiva Himself.”

Vidyā-Nyāsa⁵

“Nyāsa of Vidyā should be done on the head, Mūlādhāra,⁶ heart, three eyes, two ears, mouth, two arms, back, knees, and navel. Whoever

Aṇimā ¹ and so forth—lie within the hollow of his hands. Contemplation in the performance of Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa destroys all sins of body, speech, and mind. All lesser sins ² are destroyed by recourse to Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa. A Sādhaka who has attained Siddhi in Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa can, if he desires, enter into whatever form he sees. The life of him to whom a Sādhaka who has done Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa bows is shortened.³ Even Devatās, not to speak of men, tremble with fear at the sight of a Sādhaka who performs Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa.”

Rṣyādhi-Nyāsa, Mātrkā-Nyāsa, Vidyā-Nyāsa, Tattva-Nyāsa, Ṣoḍhā-Nyāsa, Jīva-Nyāsa, Aṅga-Nyāsa, Kara-Nyāsa, Vyāpaka-Nyāsa, Pīṭha-Nyāsa, and many other Nyāsas, have been spoken of in many Tantras. It would be extremely improper for us to publish their application. All that we can do is to refer to the authorities only. We therefore desist from referring to their application. These things, which can be learnt from Gurus only, Sādhakas will learn from their own Gurus. The etymological meaning of the word “Nyāsa” has been given in the Śāstra as follows:

“Just as wealth acquired with Nyāya or rectitude, when worn on the body in the form of ornaments, becomes a source of joy and of security in adversity and prosperity to its owner, so the Bījas of Devatās, when laid out on the limbs of a Sādhaka’s body, become to him a source of Brahma-bliss on the one hand, and of security, both here and hereafter, on the other. The word Nyāsa is formed by the combination of the initial syllables of Nyāya (because Nyāsa is like wealth acquired with Nyāya or rectitude), and of Sarva (on account of its capacity to secure Sarva, or all things).”

In Śyāmārahasya, Kālītattva, Śyāmārcana Candrikā, Kamalā Tantra, Vīra Tantra, Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Annadā Kalpa, Toḍala Tantra, Gautama Tantra, Tārārahasya, and many other Tantras, there are marked differences of opinion as regards the order in which Prāṇāyāma, Bhūtaśuddhi, Nyāsa, and so forth, should be performed. Some Tantras ordain Bhūtaśuddhi after Prāṇāyāma, and others Prāṇāyāma after Bhūtaśuddhi. Some ordain their performance before placing of Arghya,¹ and others after it. In view of the existence of such differences of opinion, Bhagavān, the Creator of all things, has, in the Svatantra Tantra, decided the question when He says "different Tantras ordain different orders of worship. A Sādhaka should follow any one of them." That is to say, one should perform worship and so forth according to the rules ordained in that particular Tantra which is specially concerned with the worship of the particular Iṣṭadevatā whom the devotee may worship.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: "He who daily performs Nyāsa according to rules stated in the Āgama Śāstra attains Divine Śakti, and acquires Siddhi in Mantra. O my beloved! from the presence of the Sādhaka who performs Japa of his Iṣṭa Mantra along with Nyāsa, Kavaca,² and Chanda,³ Devatās of obstruction⁴ fly just as a herd of elephants flies from the presence of a lion. The misguided one who does Japa⁵ without performing Nyāsa is beset by all manner of obstacles, as a young deer is beset by tigers."

Śāstra is otherwise. According to the Śāstra, Dhyāna is performed by really meditating on the form of the Devatā, no matter whether the Dhyāna-Mantra is recited or not; for the Śāstrik meaning of the expression “Dhyāyet” is “should meditate,” and not “should recite the Dhyāna-mantra.” Hence, the Dhyāna which is performed by simply reciting the Dhyāna-mantra while the mind is wandering elsewhere is no Dhyāna of the Devatā, but is rather a Dhyāna of the worshipper himself. We often see that worshippers or Purohitas consider the time which is occupied in the recitation of the Dhyāna-mantra to be a period of leisure for the mind, and utilize it in thinking on any other subject. Of course, one’s Siddhi in the worship of Devatā depends on the manner of one’s Dhyāna. It is therefore needless for us to say anything on the subject. But it is a settled fact that worship performed by this mode of Dhyāna is no worship at all.

In the Sanatkumāra Tantra it is said: “Outer worship¹ should not be done without first performing mental worship, for without inner worship outer worship is fruitless.”

In the Bhūtaśuddhi Tantra it is said: “Inner worship is ordained in all outer worship. O Maheśvarī! a single inner worship grants the fruits of a crore² of outer worships. What necessity is there for outer worship for one who has become fully accomplished in inner worship which, even if performed but only once, grants the fruits of a crore² of outer worships? An effort to perform outer worship is senseless after inner worship has been perfectly accomplished. So also is it where there is want of materials, for in the absence of necessary materials outer worship is never fruitful.”

In another Tantra it is said: “Even if all articles necessary for outer

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said: "The Sādhaka should, after performing Dhyāna of the Iṣṭadevatā in this manner, put a flower on his own head, and then worship Her with mental articles with great devotion. First, he should offer his heart-lotus for Her seat and then offer the Amṛta ¹ flowing from Sahasrāra ² for the washing of Her feet. The mind should be offered as Arghya, ³ and the Amṛta ¹ flowing from Sahasrāra for Ācamana ⁴ and bathing. The element ⁵ Ākāśa, ⁶ should be offered as raiment, the sense of smell as perfume; the heart as flower; the five Prāṇas ⁷ as incense; the element ⁵ fire ⁸ as light; the sea of nectar ⁹ as food offering ¹⁰; Anāhata Dhvani ¹¹ as a bell; the element air ¹² as a Cāmara, ¹³ and the functions of the ten senses and the restlessness of mind as the dance. ¹⁴ Next, in order to perfect self-absorption in the Devatā, the Sādhaka should offer fifteen handfuls ¹⁵ of mental flowers at Her lotus-feet. These fifteen handfuls of flowers in the form of Bhāva ¹⁶ consist of the ten flowers of non-māyā, non-egotism, non-attachment, non-vanity, non-delusion, non-arrogance, non-enmity, non-perturbance, ¹⁷ non-malice, and non-covetousness; and of the five flowers of ahimsā, ¹⁸ control of the senses, mercy, forgiveness, and knowledge. Next should be offered with the mind ¹⁹ a sea of a nectar, a mountain heap of flesh and fried fish, heaps of fried grain, ²⁰ with clarified butter, sweet rice, Kula-nectar, Kula-flowers, ²¹ and water used for washing the Piṭha. ¹⁶ Next, after offering as sacrifices, lust as a goat, and anger as a buffalo, the Sādhaka should proceed to perform mental Japa. ²² In this Japa the fifty Mātrkā letters will be the beads of rosary, and Kulakuṇḍalinī Herself will be the thread on which these beads are strung. After offering Japa in this manner and mentally

bowing with eight limbs,¹ and thus finishing the inner Yajña,² the Sādhaka should proceed to perform outer worship. At the beginning of outer worship there is purification³ of Special Arghya,⁴ concerning which listen to what I say. The mere placing of the Spécial Arghya greatly satisfies the Devatā. One seeing the Arghya vessel put in its place, Yoginīs⁵ and Brahmā and other Devas and Bhairavas dance with joy, and grant the fruits of the consummation of worship."

It is true that the Śāstra lays down these rules for mental worship or inner Yajña, and it is clearly affirmed that this worship is more fruitful than crores⁶ of other worship; but it must also be understood that inner Yajña or mental worship bears crorefold⁶ fruit only if it is thoroughly performed. It is all very well to speak or hear of giving the heart-lotus for a seat and the nectar from Sahasrāra⁷ for washing the feet; but we must consider how many people there are who are able to carry this out practically. It is a terrible thing even to hear for anyone who is not a Sādhaka accomplished in the penetration of the six Cakras.⁸ Does it not make you ashamed to think of offering the five elements Ākāśa and so forth⁹ as raiment, scent, flower, incense, and a light? It is true that for one who offers handfuls of flowers of non-māyā, non-egotism, non-attachment, non-vanity, non-delusion, non-arrogance, non-enmity, non-perturbance,¹⁰ non-envy, non-greed, non-injury, control of the senses, mercy, forgiveness, and knowledge, there is no necessity for offering handfuls of real flowers. But it is difficult to restrain one's laughter at the mere thought that a Jīva of the Samsāra who lives in the womb of Māyā, and is wholly engrossed in feelings of lust and anger, greed and delusion, vanity

proceed to offer as sacrifice, and to boast of having offered, the goat and the buffalo, the oppressions and executions of which render you restless, and make you flee with fear both day and night? You are given to saying in and out of season that outer offerings of leaves, flowers, incense, lights, Naivedya,¹ and so forth, are nothing. But we ask, Had these things been nothing, could you have known anything of that which you consider as something? If there were really no such thing as leaves, flowers, incense, lights, and so forth, whence, then, has come the provision of offering by analogy non-māyā, non-arrogance, and so forth, as flowers, and lust, anger, and so forth, as goats and buffaloes in sacrifice? If there is at the root really no offering of flowers, whence comes the provision for the offering of non-māyā, non-arrogance, and so forth, as flowers? You say that the external offering of flowers and so forth is nothing. But I ask, Is the offering of flowers of non-māyā and so forth something real? Can non-māyā, non-arrogance, and so forth, be ever flowers? Can real flowers have anything to do with the mind? Do plants in a garden ever bear flowers of non-arrogance? Does lust ever really move about in the form of a goat? Does anger ever approach you really in the form of a buffalo? Can any of these things be ever an object of offering? Now, ponder and say whether it is the outer worship or mental worship which is truly real. All that belongs to mental worship is but the imagining of an image of outer worship, and is a shadow of it. When a Jīva really attains the state of non-māyā, does he any longer make any distinction between the worshipper and that which is worshipped? What Brahman will he worship, and for what purpose, he to whom Brahman is everywhere in the world, and who

has said: "O Sādhaka! even if you are unable to make an external offering, you have at least the right to worship the Devī who is mind by seating Her in your mind, to the knowledge and full contentment of your mind. Why should you be sorry on this account so long as the Mother who is mind exists and your mind is your own? Open for once the door of the temple of mind, and, seating the Mother, who is the Mind of the mind, on the throne of the mind, worship Her with all your mind, all your heart, and all your world.¹ The full oblation in Her worship is completed with the full satisfaction of the mind.² Fulfil the desire of your heart by offering in handfuls at the feet of the Devī seated on a corpse³ all the worldly objects, desire, enjoyments, and aspirations, which are yours. Finish the mind's play with the Mother to the satisfaction of your mind. If the Mother who is mind itself appropriates to Herself the functions of your mind, it will no longer be necessary for you to perform even mental, not to speak of outer, worship.

So long as outer worship endures, there is the provision which requires performance of mental worship also. But even where these materials for outer worship are wanting, the Śāstra ordains that there also mental worship makes the Sādhaka's worship complete. For, She for whom worship is ordained is a thing of the heart, and outer worship is only an expression of the feelings of that heart.

In the Yāmala it is said: "O Maheśvarī! where outer worship is impracticable, the Spouse of Śiva should be worshipped in the heart; and from this worship the Sādhaka will reap the fruits of all forms of worship."

In the Gandharva Tantra it is said: "The man who offers mental

weapons, and family,¹ and offering mental jewelled shoes at Her lotus-feet, take Her to the bathing room.² There She should be seated on a throne and Her body first cleansed with a scented unguent composed of camphor, musk, sandal, Gorocanā,³ and Kuṅkuma,⁴ and then smeared with scented oil. Next, the Supreme Devatā should be bathed with water which has been stored in hundreds of thousands of golden pitchers, and Her body should then be towelled with silken cloths. Next, after clothing the upper and lower parts of Her body in two pieces of cloth, the hair of the Devī with dishevelled hair should be combed and tied with bejewelled silken threads. Then mark Her forehead with a Tilaka⁵ made of sandal and such other things, and paint the parting of Her hair with vermillion.⁶ Next, adorn the fair hands and arms of the Charmer of Śankara with beautiful ivory wristlets, bracelets, and armlets; Her lotus-feet and toes with jewelled anklets and toe-rings, and Her nostrils with Gajamuktā.⁷ The Sādhaka having to the best of his ability adorned the different parts of Her body in this way with ornaments and garlands of flowers, should anoint all Her limbs with scent, sandal, and perfumed gums. Let him then place a gold-embroidered bodice on Her breast."

"Meditating thus on the Devī at the time of Samādhi, the Sādhaka should after performing Bhūtaśuddhi⁸ and Nyāsas,⁸ worship the Queen of Maheśvara residing in his heart with the (other) sixteen articles of worship.⁹ First, after offering a throne of gems,¹⁰ the Sādhaka should welcome Her.⁸ Next, he should, after offering water to wash her feet,¹¹ place Arghya¹² on Her head. Let him then give the best nectar¹³ for sipping¹⁴ to Her lotus-mouth, and offer Her Madhuparka¹⁵ and then again

water for sipping thrice.¹ Next, he should mentally offer excellent sweet rice, rice mixed with clarified butter, with other food ² and condiments, a sea of nectar, a mountain-heap of flesh, a mass of fish, all kinds of fruits, edibles, and drinks—the whole well arranged in golden vessels—and then betel with camphor.³ Next, he should, after mentally worshipping the Āvaraṇa Devatās ⁴ of the Devī, perform mental Japa of Mantra.⁵ After performing Japa a thousand times, the fruits of the Japa, along with water from the Arghya vessel, should be poured on the left hand of the Devī. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, and Īśvara, form the support of the bedstead, the upper portion of which is Sadāśiva Himself.⁶ On this bed, formed of Brahma-vibhūti,⁷ is spread a milk-white coverlet, beautifully strewn with every kind of flower, and on this flowery bed Sureśvarī ⁸ lies in the enjoyment of all forms of happiness. Thus should a Yogī Sādhaka meditate upon Her. Next, he should entertain Parameśvarī with dances and with singing and playing of music, and then perform Homa for the accomplishment of the worship in all its parts. I shall now speak of this Homa, by means of which a Sādhaka becomes all consciousness.

“The Homa should be performed with the fire of consciousness in the fire-pit ⁹ of the Mūlādhāra-lotus. Ātmā, Antarātmā, Paramātmā, and Jñānātmā, are the four sides of that pit made of consciousness. The half Mātrā ¹⁰—namely, a small Bindu, with three curved lines beneath—surrounded by the waist-chain of bliss, forms the Yoni Yantra, made of Brahma-bliss.¹¹ The Sādhaka should daily perform the Homa, meditating on Idā Nāḍī on the left, Piṅgalā on the right, and Suṣumnā,¹² the door to Brahman between the two. Dharma and Adharma ¹³ should be considered

wastes the body, but medicine cures it. Medicine defeats the law of Nature according to which disease destroys the body, and shows its own supernatural or superworldly Śakti (power). By the law of Nature water is always cool, but when in contact with fire it becomes very hot, and, like fire itself, owing to the communication of the Śakti of heat into it, the same water, instead of cooling, causes a terrible burning sensation. Here also the law of Nature, according to which water is cool, is defeated by the Śakti of the thing we call fire. You, too, admit this. How, then, do you disbelieve that, under the influence of Mantraśakti, the Brahmaśakti¹ residing in the heart of a Jīva comes out with breath, and is established in the outer image of Devatā? Why do you disbelieve that, under the influence of the Śakti of Mantra, the unconscious state of earth is destroyed and divinity is communicated into it as heat is communicated to water? In fact, it is one of the terrible diseases of the nineteenth century to raise at every word the cry, "The laws of Nature are violated." It is a law of Nature that water is ordinarily cool, and it is also a law of Nature that it will become hot in contact with fire. Similarly, it is a law of Nature that earth will naturally remain earth, and it is also a law of Nature that it will receive divinity² under the influence of Mantraśakti. Why, then, raise the objection that the law of Nature is violated? In fact, the root of this objection is to be found, not in the nature of the Universe, but in the nature of the objector. He has, perhaps, with the narrow notions which are the product of his intellect and knowledge, understood Nature herself to be very narrow. And this is why he understands Nature to consist of a few common rules belonging to the material elements of the physical world.

and in order that they may possess Her sometimes as Bhagavān,¹ sometimes as Bhagavatī,¹ sometimes as Father, sometimes as Mother, sometimes as Lord,² sometimes as Īśvarī,³ and so forth, the Devī, who is will itself, though the one and only Īśvara and Īśvarī, appears in different Sādhana- and in different forms of Siddhi,⁴ playing different plays in different forms—as Śyāma and Śyāmā, as Umā and Rāma,⁵ as male and female, as Gaṇeśa and Maheśa, as Lord of wealth and Lord of day, because She is the Īśvarī³ of the hearts of Sādhakas. This is the reason why, despite Her being the Īśvarī,³ who presides over the Prāṇaśakti⁶ of the eternal Universe, Her Prāṇapratīṣṭhā⁷ is effected by the Sādhaka's Prāṇa.⁸ Even though She is the Mother of the world, the Sādhaka worships Her as his own Mother. If I perform Sādhana of the Mother, it is not because the Mother is wanting, but because I wish to make good the wants or deficiencies in myself. Even though all other beings of the three worlds perform Sādhana of the Mother, that Sādhana does not satisfy me. And the Prāṇapratīṣṭhā⁷ of the Mother is for fulfilling the desire of my own heart.

In another Tantra it is said: "Prāṇapratīṣṭhā⁷ in an image of Śiva or Śakti is done by placing the hand on its Brahmarandhra,⁹ or forehead, or brow. According to some divisions of Tāntrik teachers, Prāṇapratīṣṭhā should be done by placing the hand on the Brahmarandhra,⁹ forehead, and brow at one and the same time. Prāṇapratīṣṭhā in an image should be done by touching the heart in the case of the Viṣṇu image, in the case of other Devatās by touching the feet, and in Śivaliṅga by touching the head."

to worship with sixteen, or with five Upacāras if it is not possible to worship with even ten."

The Jñānamāla, quoted by Rāghava Bhatta,¹ says: "The different classes of Upacāra in worship are thirty-eight—sixteen, twelve, ten, and five.² I shall now relate what Upacāra are involved in each of these classes, and what fruits are gained by the use thereof.

"The thirty-eight Upacāra are—Āsana (seat), Āvāhana (invocation), Upasthiti (presence),³ Sānnidhya (nearness),⁴ Ābhimukhya (facing),⁵ Sthirīkṛti (making fast),⁶ Prasādana (pleasing),⁷ Arghya (offering), Pādhyā (water for washing the feet), Ācamana (water sipped to cleanse the lips, mouth, and throat), Madhuparka (honey, ghee, milk, and curd), Ācamana again, Snāna (bathing),⁸ Nirājana (waving of light),⁹ Vastra (cloth), Ācamana (the third time), Upavīta (sacred thread),¹⁰ Ācamana again (the fourth time), Bhūṣaṇa (ornaments),¹¹ Darpaṇāvalokana (looking at a mirror),¹² Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flower), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light),¹³ Naivedya (offerings of food), Pāniya (offerings of drink), the fifth Ācamaniya (water for sipping as above), Hastavāsa (napkin),¹⁴ Tāmbula (betel),¹⁵ Anulepana (unguent),¹⁶ Puṣpāñjali (handful of flowers), Gīta (singing), Vādyā (instrumental music), Nṛtya (dancing), Stuti (reciting hymns in praise), Pradakṣiṇa (walking round),¹⁷ Puṣpāñjali (second handful of flowers), and Namaskāra (obeisance).¹⁸ These are the thirty-eight Upacāra."

¹ The great Tāntrik Commentator on the Śāradātilaka.

² As appears from the text which follows, the Upacāra are given in numbers

Thirty-six Upacāra

In the fifty-fifth Paṭala of Nibandha¹ it is said: “Āsana (seat), Dantakāṣṭha² (stick for cleansing the teeth), Udvardana³ (anointing the body). Virūkṣaṇa (rubbing the body),⁴ Sammārjana (rubbing off),⁵ Abhyañjana (second anointing), Snāna (bathing with ghee and so forth), Āvāhana (invocation), Pādya (water for washing the feet), Arghya (offering), Ācamanīya (water sipped to cleanse the mouth), Snānīya (water for bathing), Madhuparka (mixture of honey, milk, ghee, and curd), Ācamanīya again, Namaskāra (obeisance), Nṛtya (dancing), Gīta (singing), Vādyā (instrumental music and offering of other things)⁶ Stuti (reciting hymns in praise), Homa,⁷ Pradakṣiṇa (walking round), Darpaṇadarśana (looking at a mirror), Cāmaravyājana (waving of Cāmara),⁸ Śāyā (bed),⁹ Anulepana (unguent), Vastra (cloth)¹⁰ Alaṅkāra (ornaments), Upavīta (sacred thread), Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light), Balidāna (offering of sacrifice),¹¹ Tarpaṇa (offering libations of water), Ātmasamarpaṇa (self-dedication), and Visarjana (dismissal). These are the thirty-six Upacāra.”

Eighteen Upacāra

In the third Paṭala of the Phetkārīṇī Tantra, quoted in the Śyāmārahaśya, it is said: “Āsana (seat), Āvāhana (invocation), Arghya (offering), Pādya (water for washing the feet), Ācamanīya (water sipped to cleanse the mouth), Snāna (bathing), Vastra (cloth), Upavīta (sacred thread),

Sixteen Upacāra

In the Śivārcana Candrikā it is said: “Āsana (seat), Svāgata (welcome),¹ Pādyā (water for washing the feet), Arghya (offering), Ācamanīya (water of sipping as above stated), Madhuparka (mixture of honey, milk, ghee, and curd), Ācamana (cleansing of mouth), Snāna (bathing), Vasana (cloth), Ābharanā (ornaments), Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light), Naivedya (offerings of food), and Vandana (prayer with hymns in praise). These sixteen Upacāra should be used and done in worship.”

Sixteen Upacāra described in Another Way

In the Mantraratanāvali, quoted in the Kṛṣṇārcana-candrikā, it is said: “Pādyā (water for washing the feet), Arghya (offering), Ācamanīya (water sipped to cleanse the mouth), Snāna (bathing), Vasana (cloth), Bhūṣaṇa (ornaments), Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light), Naivedya (offerings of food), Ācamana (water sipped as above), Tāmbula (betel), Arcana-Stotra (hymns of praise), Tarpaṇa (offering libations of water), and Namaskāra (obeisance).”

Twelve Upacāra

In the Svatantra Tantra it is said: “Arghya (offering),² Pādyā (water for washing the feet), Ācamanīya (water sipped for cleansing the mouth), Madhuparka (mixture of milk, ghee, honey, and curd), Ācamana again

Seven Upacāra

In the Prayogasāra, quoted by Rāghava Bhaṭṭa, it is said: “ Arghya (offering), Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), Akṣata (barley, or ātapa rice), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light), and Naivedya (offerings of food). With these is performed seven-limbed worship.”

Five Upacāra

In the fifty-fifth Paṭala of the Nibandha Tantra it is said: “ Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), Dhūpa (incense), Dīpa (light), and Naivedya (offerings of food). These are the five Upacāra. A Sādhaka should always use these five in worshipping his Iṣṭadevatā.”

Three Upacāra

“ The five Upacāra less Dhūpa (incense) and Dīpa (light)—that is to say, Gandha (perfume), Puṣpa (flowers), and Naivedya (offerings of food)—are known as the three Upacāra.

“ The different classes of Upacāra above enumerated consist of items varying from thirty-six to three in number. The misguided Sādhaka who, for the sake of economy, though able to worship with the first named classes, proceeds to perform worship with the latter, never obtains the fruits of the worship as stated in the Śāstra.”

